

# Angelo State University • Magazine

Summer 2009 • Volume 2 • Number 2

MEMBER, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Touching Tomorrow's  
**Doctors**

**Dream  
Worlds**

**Raising  
the Bar**

**Voices for the People**





# Message

## from the President

Dear Friends:

Angelo State University has benefitted in numerous ways from its Sept. 1, 2007, transition to the Texas Tech University System (TTUS). The ability to utilize the governmental relations staff of the TTUS was extremely helpful during this year's session of the Texas Legislature. The very pro-active stance of the TTUS Board of Regents has translated directly into over \$50 million in new construction for the campus.

At the same time, ASU must meet the strategic expectations of the TTUS, the most important of which is growth in campus enrollment. For ASU, that means we must overcome nearly a decade of little or no growth to achieve the desired target of 10,000 students. Students come to ASU from 215 counties in Texas, 37 states and 21 countries. They come for a variety of reasons – location, scholarships, athletics – but most importantly because of the opportunities their ASU degree provides after graduation. We have many fine programs on campus, but we have a special and distinct strength in our array of pre-professional opportunities.

So, it is fitting that this edition of the *Angelo State University Magazine* highlights the success of our pre-professional programs in medicine and law and profiles some of our alumni, spread from Boston to San Diego, in those fields. These pre-professional programs are supported by areas as diverse as biology and government. Small classes and close interactions with faculty produce graduates with exceptional preparation for graduate school or entry to the world of work. Since 1997 our students have maintained a 100 percent passing rate on the Texas Examination of Educator Standards teacher certification test for secondary math. All of our Honors Program graduates who have applied to graduate and professional programs, including law and medical school, have been accepted.

In June 2008, we made a commitment to expand our professional programs with the creation of a separate College of Nursing and Allied Health. Nursing joined with Physical Therapy, which recently became the first doctoral program at ASU, as the initial departments in the college. Our top priority is a new building to house these existing programs, as well as to expand to other areas – such as occupational therapy – that are in great demand in our region and elsewhere.

As we position ASU to achieve its target of 10,000 students, we must build on our many great strengths. Clearly, our leadership position in pre-professional programs will be an essential ingredient to achieve our goals. As you read this edition of the magazine, you'll see why we will be successful.

Sincerely,



Joseph C. Rallo  
President



Joseph C. Rallo





# Angelo State University Magazine

Summer 2009 Vol. 2, No. 2

## Angelo State University

Member, Texas Tech University System

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### Angelo State University Magazine

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**Editor's Note:** So what if Angelo State University lacks a law or medical school. ASU's pre-professional programs are turning out graduates that can compete with their peers at any medical or law school in the nation. And, our physicians and lawyers are making a difference from Boston to San Diego.

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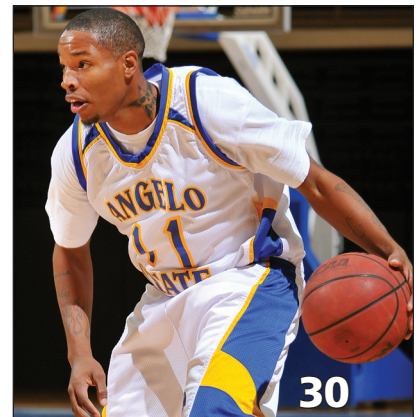
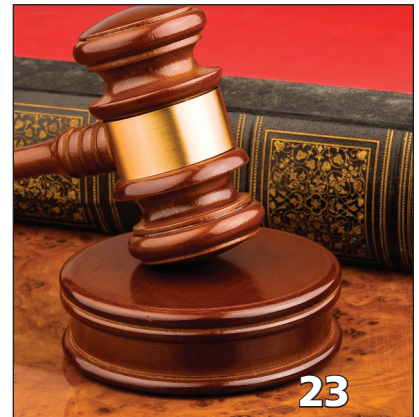
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**On the cover:** Pre-med students Jami Barnard and Jared Bird visit Shannon Medical Center to get a look not only into their futures but also into the future of medicine. (Photo by Danny Meyer – Location Courtesy of Shannon Medical Center)

**Back Cover:** While the Legislature was in session during the spring semester, Angelo State University administrators, alumni and friends spent a lot of time under the dome in the rotunda of the Texas State Capitol. The highlight was ASU's participation in the university's first Texas Tech University System Day in February. (Photo by Danny Meyer)





# you said...

Editor:

I had to drop you a quick note to say the spring issue of *Angelo State University Magazine* is absolutely stunning! The theme of “service” was just brilliantly highlighted on every page. It is a beautiful publication. Thank you so much for all the hard work that went into this. You are greatly appreciated.

Leslie Mayrand  
Dean, College of Nursing  
and Allied Health

Editor:

Thank you for the magazine article (Rebuilding History, spring 2009). It was great!

Support like this is what keeps us going at Fort Chadbourne. Thanks.

Garland and Lana Richards  
Bronte, Texas

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Mickey L. Long



John Huffaker



Nancy Neal

Photos Courtesy of Texas Tech

## New Regents

### A 1976 Angelo State graduate

is among three new regents appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to six-year terms on the board of the Texas Tech University System (TTUS) and subsequently confirmed by the Texas Senate.

ASU alumnus Mickey L. Long of Midland joined John Huffaker of Amarillo and Nancy Neal of Lubbock as the newest board members. They were sworn in March 5. At the same time, Larry Anders of Dallas and Jerry Turner of Blanco began two-year terms as board chair and vice chair, respectively.

Long is president of Westex Well Service LP. He is a member of the Association of Energy Service Companies, Texas Tech University Foundation, Angelo State University Alumni Foundation, Red Raider Club National Board of Directors and Texas Tech Hall of Legacy. Long received his bachelor's degree from Angelo State University in 1976. He succeeded Bob Stafford of Amarillo on the board.

Huffaker is a partner at Sprouse Shrader Smith Law Firm. He is a member of the State Bar of Texas, Amarillo Bar Association, Texas Association of Bank Counsel and College of the State Bar. He is past chair of the Amarillo College Board of Regents, founding president of the Amarillo Educa-

tion Foundation and a member of the Texas Tech Law School Foundation Board of Trustees. Huffaker received his bachelor's and law degrees from Texas Tech. He succeeded Windy Sitton of Lubbock as regent.

Neal is a registered nurse and former school health nurse. She is a past member of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, past president of the Lubbock Independent School District Board of Trustees and a past regent of the Texas State University System when ASU was a member of that system. She serves on the Texas Tech School of Nursing Development Committee. Neal received a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. She succeeded F. Scott Dueser of Abilene on the board.

TTUS Chancellor Kent Hance said, “All three are great appointees and will add a lot to our board. I look forward to their leadership. I’ve known all three for decades. They are all tremendous supporters of our universities. John was a student of mine at Texas Tech. Mickey is an Angelo State University graduate, the first to serve on our board since the school became part of our system. And, Nancy is another long-time friend. She brings a lot of higher education and health care knowledge to her position.” ■



# Dr. Yes

**A graduate student** beginning classes this May will start on a course of destiny with Angelo State University history.

In three years almost to the day, this individual by luck of the alphabet will become the first student ever to receive an academic doctorate from ASU.

The clock on that date with destiny started ticking in January when the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) gave final approval for a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program to begin accepting students for classes starting this summer.

THECB approval puts Angelo State University on course to award its first doctoral degree during May commencement exercises in 2012.

ASU President Joseph C. Rallo said the new degree program is a milestone in Angelo State history.

“Being able to offer a doctorate,” said Dr. Rallo, “is recognition of the quality of a program and, by extension, the quality of a university. This doctorate is another step in the evolution of Angelo State University and in fulfilling our commitment to the residents of the Concho Valley and the people of the State of Texas.”

The ASU physical therapy program began in 1999, accepted its first students in the summer of 2000 and conferred its first Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) degrees upon 10 graduates in December of 2002. Not only is the PT Department one of the youngest on campus, the College of Nursing and Allied Health where it resides administratively was created just last September.

Nursing and Allied Health Dean Leslie Mayrand said the DPT is part of the first phase of the new college’s development and reflects planned growth of the college to address health needs for West Texas and beyond.



PT students Rachel Williams, left, and Ashley King

Photo by Danny Meyer

Dr. Mayrand said, “This is an honor to our young college and a testament to the hard work of our physical therapy faculty in building the strong foundation that made this doctorate possible.”

Dr. Scott Hasson, head of the Physical Therapy Department, said “I think our faculty and, in particular, Dr. Shelly Weise should be commended for their work in bringing about the DPT. The Department of Physical Therapy and the College of Nursing and Allied Health under the leadership of Dean Mayrand will serve as a catalyst in further evolution of Angelo State as a more research-intensive university.”

The application process for establishing a doctoral degree is extensive, requiring approval from the Texas Tech University System Board of Regents and the THECB as well as authorization from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredits Angelo State, and the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

Hasson said that with 95 percent of the nation’s programs converting from the MPT to the DPT, it was imperative for ASU to move to the doctoral level to attract students. The change also reflects a broader goal of the American Physical Therapy Association to produce autonomous, self-directed primary care providers in physical therapy by 2020.

“The practice of physical therapy is envisioned to go well beyond today’s notions of providing only rehabilitation care,” Hasson said. “The physical therapist of the near future will provide health/wellness advice and care to stem the rise of self-generating diseases such as diabetes, cancer and cardiopulmonary pathologies. Inactivity, obesity, smoking and alcohol/drug abuse are problems that will impact health as many Americans age.”

Hasson said the DPT will require a revision and expansion of the department’s curriculum. The number of courses will increase from 24 at the MPT level to 27 at the DPT level. In addition to extensive classroom work, PT students must complete 30 weeks, up from 24, of clinical training. The clinical rotations include eight weeks of hospital acute care, 10 weeks of outpatient orthopedic training and 12 weeks of rehabilitation instruction. In addition to the increased coursework and clinical training, the time to complete the degree will increase from 2.5 years for the MPT to three years for the DPT.

“Ultimately,” said Hasson, “as the department and university evolve toward a doctoral university, I believe our move to this degree will focus even more emphasis on undergraduate, graduate and faculty research.” ■



# Works in Progress

**Terrance Hayes** takes his inspiration to write poetry from wherever he can get it and in whatever forms it comes.

"You are always working through some idea, some impression, and you're lucky if you can write a poem you were just inspired by," said Hayes, creative writing professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. "Sometimes poems come from experiences. Sometimes they come from dreams and ideas. I can let an idea be what it is, or I can figure out some way to transform it into something like a poem."

"If it's a new idea, maybe it will be a poem in five or 10 years," he said. "They come from daily life. They come from everywhere; they sort of have to. You can't wait for an idea to hit. You have to have something to write about."

Hayes discussed his writing process during ASU's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Writers Conference in honor of Elmer Kelton during the spring semester.

Hayes said the first version of a poem is not likely to be the last, either.

"If a year passes and I'm still working on a poem, there have

probably been several hundred revisions," he said. "I don't worry too much about it. I sort of keep moving forward. I imagine it is similar to the way cooks work. You cook it until you get it right."

Hayes said that poems come in two types that he has identified.

"I often say, 'that's a teachable poem,' which means if I took it to a classroom, we'd have a pretty good conversation about it," he said. "There is another kind of poem where the poets don't have a framework that's discernable. They write something that's more intuitive and those are poems that matter to me. They are difficult because you can't identify all the things that make them work."

Hayes said he wouldn't choose one over the other because there are romantic and simplistic dimensions to both.

"If it's teachable, it's probably also academic," he said. "They are both valid."

Hayes also discussed his penchant for using the same title for different poems.

"When I finished a poem called 'Wind in a Box,' there was something else I wanted to say, so I would just go at it again. The overlap was obvious, but I kept working towards it. Most of us have overlap in esthetics."

*Wind in a Box* (Penguin, 2006), *Hip Logic* (2002), which won the National Poetry Series, and *Muscular Music* (1999), winner of the Kate Tufts Discovery Award are some of Hayes well-known works.

He also has won a Whiting Writers Award, a Pushcart Prize, a Best American Poetry selection and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship.

The conference honors San Angelo's Kelton, author of more than 40 books and a seven-time winner of the Western Writers of America's Spur Award.

The ASU English Department hosts the conference, which is sponsored by the university. It is funded in part by Follett Higher Education Group, the ASU Alumni Association, the College of Liberal and Fine Arts, the English Department, and Guy and Eva Choate. ■

Art by Michael Martin



# briefs

## Davidson Chair

The James A. "Buddy" Davidson Charitable Foundation of Midland has pledged \$1 million to establish an endowed chair in the ASU College of Nursing and Allied Health (CNAH).

The endowment will be paid out over three years with the first \$300,000 installment received in January. The James A. "Buddy" Davidson Chair in Nursing Excellence will be the first endowed chair in ASU's newest college.

"An endowed chair will allow us to continue to attract outstanding faculty to help us achieve our goal of expanding graduate programs that prepare advanced practice nurses to care for Texans, particularly in rural areas," said Dr. Leslie Mayrand, dean of nursing and allied health. "An endowed chair is a hallmark of an outstanding program and we are truly grateful to the Davidson Foundation for its confidence and support of ASU nursing."

Funds generated by the Davidson Chair will enable ASU to provide a complete Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) family nurse practitioner degree program on campus. Currently, ASU students complete 21 hours of core coursework toward a MSN, then must transfer to the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center for the final 27 credit hours necessary to complete the degree. However, some stu-

dents are turned away due to lack of space in the Texas Tech program.

Increasingly, nurse practitioners are serving as the primary care providers for residents in small towns and rural areas that are unable to attract physicians.

## TEXES Excellence

For the 12<sup>th</sup> straight year, ASU students have maintained a 100 percent passing rate on the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TEXES) teacher certification test for secondary mathematics.

Four ASU students took the TEXES in January and their average score of 269.5 out of 300 was well above last year's state average score of 226.5. The perfect passing rate streak began in 1998. Since then, all 128 ASU students who have taken the exam after completing the mathematics program have passed. The statewide pass rate for the secondary math TEXES was 61 percent in 2004, the latest year for which full results are available.

"It makes me proud," said Dr. Paul Swets, head of ASU's Department of Mathematics. "It's a great reflection on our program, our faculty and the students we get in our department."

Additionally, ASU students also posted a 100 percent pass rate in January on the TEXES teacher certification test for middle school mathematics. This marked ASU's sixth straight year

with a perfect pass rate on the middle school exam.

## Top Chapter – Tri-Beta

For a record sixth time, ASU's Epsilon Sigma chapter of the Beta Beta Beta (Tri-Beta) Biology Honor Society has earned the Lloyd M. Bertholf Award as the top chapter in the nation.

The award for the 2007-08 academic year makes the ASU chapter the first six-time winner out of the more than 510 chapters in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. No other chapter has won the award more than four times.

Since 1961 the Bertholf Award has been presented, based on chapter activity in conducting and publishing research, participating in scientific meetings, scheduling activities, and maintaining orderly records and communication with the National Office. The winning chapter is chosen each year by a selection committee of college biology faculty from across the nation.

"Our Tri-Beta group recently hosted a surprise celebration for me that recognized my 30 years as faculty adviser of the ASU chapter," said Dr. Crosby Jones, professor of biology. "Winning the Bertholf Award in the same year confirms to me that my decision, made many years ago, to accept the chapter's invitation to be its adviser in exchange for a promise from the members that they would work hard to achieve excellence, was

the right one for me. I'm as proud of them for winning this award as I was when they won the first one."

## Top Chapter – SPS

Once again, the national Society of Physics Students (SPS) has designated the ASU group as an outstanding chapter, ranking it in the top 10 percent of society chapters nationally for the 2007-08 school year.

ASU's SPS group has received this award for seven consecutive years and is one of only four so recognized chapters in Texas. The award is based on a chapter's physics research, community outreach activities, physics tutoring programs, the number of active members and involvement with national physics communities through internships and organizational meetings.

The Angelo State organization was recognized both for its "very impressive outreach and national involvement" and as "an integral part of the physics program." The commendation noted that the ASU chapter "continues to grow and evolve as student and departmental needs change."

With about 100 physics majors at ASU, weekly SPS meeting attendance ranges between 30-40 participants.

"The ASU SPS is a very active group on campus and provides a strong sense of community for physics stu-

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# briefs

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dents,” said Dr. Toni Sauncy, associate professor of physics and the group’s faculty adviser. “We are one of the most active chapters in the nation. It is my pleasure to be associated with these young people.”

## Mammalogy Honors

Two ASU biology students won top prizes for their research presentations at the 2009 annual meeting of the Texas Society of Mammalogists (TSM).

Graduate student Dana Lee won the TSM Award for Best Oral Presentation in mammalian systematics for her talk on “Taxonomic Status of the Davis Mountains Cottontail, *Sylvilagus robustus* (Lagomorpha: Leporidae) Revealed by Amplified Fragment Length Polymorphism.”

Senior Wesley Brashear received the Rollin Baker Award for Best Undergraduate Presentation for his research “Home Range and Den Site Analysis of the American Hog-Nosed Skunk, *Conepatus leuconotus*.”

## Go Fish

ASU Bass Anglers Club fishermen placed fifth and won \$2,000 in the National Guard FLW College Fishing Texas Division Tournament on Sam Rayburn Reservoir this spring.

Josh Seale of Breckenridge and Austin Adcock of Leander landed six bass totaling 15 lbs., 10 oz. for the day to place fifth. The winnings will be split evenly between the

ASU Bass Anglers Club and the university.

A second ASU club team of Audwin Hall of Brownwood and Wes Smith of San Angelo landed 12 lbs., 7 oz. of bass to place 13<sup>th</sup> in the tournament.

Full-time students enrolled in four-year colleges or universities are eligible to participate in the FLW College Fishing series, which is organized into five geographical divisions. Schools can send two-person teams to each of four qualifying events in their division. Seale and Adcock will advance to the Texas Regional Championship Nov. 14-16 in Natchitoches, La.

## RAMS Repeats

For the second straight year, the Office of Multicultural and Community Relations has received a \$25,000 Generation Proud grant from the Greater Texas Foundation to aid ASU’s recruiting and retention efforts for first generation students.

The grant money will help fund ASU’s First Generation RAMS (Raising and Meeting Standards) program, which links seasoned first generation students who have completed at least one semester with new first generation students in a mentoring relationship for the fall semester. The mentor and mentee students are then eligible to apply for scholarships, ranging from \$500-\$1,500, funded by the grant for the following spring semester.

“Our office works not just to recruit students, but to re-

tain them as well,” said Flor Madero, multicultural and community relations coordinator. “We know that when students connect to the campus, there is a higher likelihood that they will stay, so that is where the mentor program comes in.”

The scholarships are distributed based on fall semester participation, the students’ fall GPAs and financial need. In 2008, the RAMS program distributed 15 scholarships. This past spring 42 students signed up as mentors and mentees.

## Texas Academy of Science

Eight ASU students won honors for their research presentations at the 112<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Texas Academy of Science this spring at the Texas Tech University Llano River Field Station in Junction.

First-place student awards went to Jason Strickland in biology for his undergraduate oral presentation, “The Western Cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus leucostoma*) in West-Central Texas: The Demography and Venom Collection in a Peripheral Population,” and to Dana Lee in biology for her graduate oral presentation, “Taxonomic Status of the Davis Mountains Cottontail, *Sylvilagus robustus*, (Lagomorpha: Leporidae) Revealed by Amplified Fragment Length Polymorphism.” Faculty advisers for the two projects were Dr. Kelly McCoy and Dr. Loren

Ammerman, respectively, of the biology faculty.

ASU mathematics students Henry Schreiner III and Massooma Pirbhai each garnered honorable mention for their undergraduate oral presentations. The pair also shared the Dr. Ali Reza Amir-Moez Award for best mathematics presentation. Each was advised by Dr. Roger Zarnowski.

Other ASU student winners included Adam Ferguson in biology (second place, graduate research proposal); Wesley Brashear in biology (third place, undergraduate research proposal); and Shane Guthrie and Jared Bird in chemistry and biochemistry (honorable mention, undergraduate poster presentation).

The Texas Academy of Science is one of the oldest and most respected science organizations in the state. Its purpose is to promote scientific research among the colleges and universities of Texas, to promote undergraduate research and to enhance the professional development of its members.

## Stock Answers

ASU’s Livestock Show Team ended a successful season at the San Angelo Livestock Show and Rodeo, bringing home a host of ribbons in San Angelo, Fort Worth and San Antonio.

The ASU team earned the Reserve Champion Ram in all three contests and racked up a total of seven first place ribbons, four second places and eight third places as well



# angelostaters

## PEOPLE WHO MAKE ASU GREAT

as the Champion Flock in Fort Worth.

ASU team members were graduate student Thomas Epting and undergraduates Jerred Griffith, Casey Grounds, Lura Hayes and Tiffany Kennemer.

### National Champs

The Invisibles, an ASU intramural flag football team, won the co-recreational division of the National Campus Championship Series Flag Football Championships in December in Tampa, Fla.

The Invisibles defeated a University of North Carolina-Charlotte squad, 27-16, in the championship game. The ASU squad advanced to the championship game by defeating Central Florida University, 25-16, in the quarterfinals and the University of South Florida, 27-10, in the semifinals.

Previously, the Invisibles won the ASU intramural championship and the South Central Regional Championship at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches to advance to the national tournament.

ASU's Apolynne Pilapil was named female Most Valuable Player and teammate Blake McCarthy won male Most Valuable Player honors. A third Invisibles player, Jerrell Jones, was picked for the all-tournament team.

### Inner Space

Fall 2008 statistics from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) show that Angelo State's

classroom and laboratory utilization rankings have improved 27 places over the previous fall in comparison to the state's 34 other four-year public institutions.

For 2008 ASU's laboratory utilization ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the state, compared to 31<sup>st</sup> in 2007, while classroom utilization improved from 32<sup>nd</sup> in 2007 to 26<sup>th</sup> in 2008.

Greg Pecina, executive director of business services for ASU, said the improvement was the result of a truly campus-wide effort to make most effective use of available classroom and laboratory space through greater scheduling coordination and implementation of Coordinating Board guidelines for classroom and laboratory usage.

ASU President Joseph C. Rallo said the staff work shows how ASU can improve its standing among state institutions without any additional financial requirements. Additionally, the improved rankings came at a critical time in the state legislative cycle.

"The utilization statistics, particularly for our laboratories," Rallo said, "will help provide support for our request for a new building for our College of Nursing and Allied Health."

ASU's lab utilization increased from 16.17 hours per week in 2007 to 28.83 in 2008. Regular classroom usage increased from 24.43 hours per week in 2007 to 29.08 hours a week in 2008. ■

### Harriet Lewis

Harriet Lewis, the academic coordinator of clinical education in ASU's Physical Therapy Department, has been appointed to a three-year term on the American Physical Therapy Association's (APTA) Clinical Instruction Education Board (CIEB).

The CIEB oversees the APTA's basic and advanced Clinical Instructor Education and Credentialing Programs. Lewis is the only credentialed clinical trainer for both programs in the State of Texas and one of only 49 so credentialed nationwide. Her teaching audience includes not only students in her ASU classroom but also PT practitioners who accept students from any PT program for clinical rotations in their health care facilities.

"This appointment," said ASU President Joseph C. Rallo, "is a remarkable accomplishment for her and for ASU when you consider that she started our clinical program less than a decade ago and today has influence in PT clinical education nationwide."

After founding department head Kathy Cegles, Lewis was the second full-time physical therapist hired for ASU's new PT program in 1999. She developed ASU's PT clinical program, securing 116 clinical contracts that provide ASU student access to hundreds of facilities nationwide, including such prestigious sites as Mayo Clinic, Texas Children's Hospital, Methodist Hospital in Houston and the Kessler Institute of Rehabilitation in West Orange, N.J., all included on the *U.S. News and World Report* list of best hospitals nationally.

ASU physical therapy students began making clinical rotations in 2001. Since then, 114 students have done more than 300 rotations in hospitals and other clinical settings throughout Texas and the U.S.

Before joining the PT faculty, Lewis had 27 years of clinical experience in a variety of settings, including acute care, outpatient orthopedic physical therapy, nursing home, long-term acute care and home health.

### Karen Shumway

Dr. Karen Shumway, ASU associate professor of management, has been named a regional recipient of the 2009 Teaching Excellence Award from the Association of Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

Shumway, who joined the ASU faculty in 2002, was scheduled to receive her award along with other regional honorees at the ACBSP 2009 Annual Conference in late June in San Antonio. The recognition includes a medallion and a \$100 honorarium. As a regional honoree, she became a candidate for one of two ACBSP International Teaching Excellence Awards.

— continued

“Dr. Shumway is a gifted teacher and an effective scholar,” said Dr. Tom Badgett, head of the ASU Department of Management and Marketing. “Her peers note she does an outstanding job in presenting instructional goals and objectives, demonstrates a very high level of knowledge in the subjects she teaches, relates well with students and faculty alike, and is highly accessible for students. She plays a valuable leadership role within the department and is held in high esteem for her achievements and competence.”

The ACBSP was established in 1988 and is a leading accreditation association for business education recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. It is also the only specialized accrediting body for business schools that presents an award recognizing excellence in teaching. ACBSP has more than 585 members in 25 countries and eight regions. Angelo State University is located in Region 6, which includes Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

### Chris Ellery

English professor Chris Ellery has been inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters (TIL) in recognition of his achievements as a poet and translator.

The non-profit TIL recognizes literary achievement and stimulates interest in Texas writers. Awards are given annually to recognize writers' published works.

Dr. Ellery's poems have appeared in dozens of literary journals, including *descant*, *Cimarron Review*, *AVOCET* and *New Texas*. He also penned two books of poetry, *Quarry* (Mountain Muse Press, 2005) and *All This Light We Live In* (Panther Creek Press, 2006).

In addition, he co-translated *Whatever Happened to Antara*, a collection of short stories by award-winning Syrian writer Walid Ikhlassi, published by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas Press, 2004.

Ellery joins fellow ASU faculty members Dr. Arnoldo De León of history and Dr. Terry Dalrymple of English as TIL members.

### Bradley Petty

Bradley Petty, director of University Recreation and Intramurals, has been named to the American Collegiate Intramural Sports (ACIS) Hall of Fame in New Orleans.

Petty was inducted into the ACIS Hall of Fame in December at the University of New Orleans for his work within the organization as a game official.

He officiated at the organization's national flag football tournaments as a student at Sam Houston State University from 1991-93 and as a graduate student at the University of Southern Mississippi from 1994-96. Petty also received All-America awards in 1991 and 1992 from the organization. He served as evaluator of officials from 1997-99, as assistant director of officials from

2000-04, and as ACIS director of officials since 2005.

The current edition of the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association flag football rulebook was dedicated to him in April. The rulebook honors a professional in the intramural field who plays a significant part in the advancement of flag football.

### Staff Excellence Awards

Four staff members received Staff Excellence Awards this spring for their ASU job performance during the 2008 calendar year.

Honorees were Antonio Barrientos, events manager, Special Events; Jo Nell Harlow, office coordinator, Department of Mathematics; Carl Martin, e-learning service specialist, Information Technology; and Mark Multer, building maintenance technician, Facilities Management.

The Staff Excellence Awards are given each spring semester in recognition of outstanding job performance during the preceding calendar year. The awards recognize non-teaching staff members whose job performance exceeds the customary standards or who exhibit outstanding skills or dedication while performing special projects. Each of the four recipients received a plaque and \$650 honorarium.

Honorees were selected by a committee of the ASU Staff Senate from 30 staff members nominated by their fellow employees for outstanding overall job performance or



outstanding performance on a special project.

An ASU employee since 2006, Barrientos assists in the set-up and execution of all special events and sporting activities held in the Junell Center. Harlow, who joined the ASU staff in 1994, was honored for her overall exemplary performance and her continuing excellence in serving the multiple needs of the Mathematics Department.

A member of the ASU staff since 2000, Martin is responsible for supporting ASU's online education initiatives and conducting all new software training for faculty and staff. Multer is the university carpenter and oversees all maintenance for several buildings on campus.

### **Anita Wheeler**

ASU nursing graduate student Anita Wheeler received the 2009 John P. McGovern Award from the Texas School Health Association (TSHA) at the organization's annual conference in January.

The McGovern Award recognizes and honors individuals for their outstanding contributions and distinguished service in the field of school health. Wheeler is currently the coordinator of the School Health Program for the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and also serves as the state school nurse consultant. In the conference program, she was described as "a great example of one of those quiet leaders who has contributed

significantly to improving the quality of coordinated school health in Texas."

A former board member and past president of TSHA, Wheeler originally joined DSHS as the Texas School Health Network coordinator after serving more than six years as the school health specialist for Education Service Center Region XV in San Angelo.

A native of Arlington, Wheeler received her associate nursing degree from Angelo State in 1983 and her bachelor's degree in 2001. She is currently pursuing her Master of Science in Nursing in ASU's nurse educator track.

### **ASU Cheerleaders**

ASU's cheerleading squad placed fifth in their first appearance at the Universal Cheerleaders Association College Nationals in January in Orlando.

The ASU squad competed in the All-Girl Division II with 12 other teams. The 18-member team performed a one-minute cheer and a 90-second music routine that included squad tumbling, dance, basket tosses, pyramids and group stunts, according to ASU cheerleading coach Kim Kuhns.

Squad members making the trip were Heather Bustos, Paige Eddington, Katie Fisher, Tonya Garza, Emily Griffin, Niki Kestenbaum, co-captain Katy Kirchoff, Kirsten Lesko, Brianna Maldonado, co-captain Anna-Marie Parker, Kelly Payne, Kathy Pena, Hayley

Ragsdale, Lauren Schoonover, Felicia Villarreal, Crystal Watson, Jordan Young and Vanessa Castaneda.

### **Jakody Huckaby**

Jakody C. Huckaby, a graduate assistant in ASU's University Recreation and Intramurals Department, has won a William N. Wasson Student Leadership and Academic Award from the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA).

Huckaby is one of 12 graduate students nationwide selected for the annual award at the NIRSA National Conference.

Huckaby, from Denver City, joins UREC Assistant Director James "Dan" Robertson as the only ASU students to win the award.

The award is named for NIRSA founder Wasson and honors outstanding student leaders who demonstrate academic success and exceptional service to their institutions and communities.

### **Grady Blount**

Dr. Grady Price Blount, dean of the College of Sciences, has been elected secretary of the Texas Association of Deans of Liberal Arts and Sciences (TADLAS).

As the secretary, Blount will be responsible for transcribing notes, posting minutes, writing white papers and performing research for the TADLAS president.

TADLAS promotes all aspects of higher education in the arts and sciences. All

Texas colleges and universities recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board are institutional members. All deans, associate deans and assistant deans responsible for any of the liberal arts and sciences at member institutions are voting members.

Blount joined the ASU faculty in 2006 and is also a professor of geology. Prior to his arrival at ASU, he was the assistant vice president for research and associate graduate dean at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. He taught previously at the University of North Dakota.

### **Terry Maxwell**

ASU biology professor Terry Maxwell has been elected president of the Texas Society of Mammalogists for 2009.

In addition to his teaching duties, Dr. Maxwell is the curator of birds for the Angelo State Natural History Collections. He has been honored by the ASU Student Senate, Faculty Senate and Alumni Association for teaching excellence. In 2007 he was named a Piper Distinguished Professor by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation, the highest classroom honor for university professors in Texas.

The Texas Society of Mammalogists was established in 1983 to promote the study of mammals, both living and fossil. ■

# Touching Tomorrow's

# Doctors

by Tom Nurre



Photo by Danny Meyer - Location courtesy of Shannon Medical Center

Jami Barnard and Jared Bird

**Without a lot of fanfare,** Angelo State University's pre-health program has quietly been sending students to medical schools at a rate considerably higher than both the state and national averages.

Nestled within a smaller West Texas university, the ASU program has stood toe-to-toe with larger universities in preparing budding doctors, dentists, chiropractors and optometrists for their next big step. Smaller class sizes and greater access to the faculty on the Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC) work in favor of both the students and the professors at ASU.

The closer student-professor relationship is also a key factor in ASU's 49 percent medical school acceptance rate since 2002, compared to the 35-39 percent state average and the national average of about 45 percent.

"The folks on that committee advise the students one-on-one," said Dr. Russell Wilke, associate professor of biology and HPAC leader. "The students feel comfortable talking to us about just about anything. Because we get to know the students so well, we can write better evaluations of them. We can add a lot more because of that personal level of attention we give students."

San Angelo native Jami Barnard got her bachelor's degree in psychology from Texas A&M and then went to midwifery school in Oregon. But, once she decided that medical school was her calling, the close-knit atmosphere at ASU drew her back home.

"I loved my time at A&M and my teachers were great," Barnard said, "but it was really hard to find that one-on-one time with them. Here at ASU, professors were not only available for answering my class-related questions, they were also there when I needed help planning my future professional life. My professors really went above and beyond anything that I could have expected."

The ASU environment also swayed Ozona native Jared Bird away from his parents' desire of having him attend the University of Texas.

"The small town feel of ASU is really what does it for me," Bird said. "Even with professors I don't know, I can step into their offices and ask them for help or ask any general question and they will be glad to answer it. It is a great feeling. My parents are now seeing that ASU is a good fit for me."

Another major factor in the success of the Angelo State program is the plentiful opportunities for students to do job shadowing. ASU has set up a network of local physicians, many of them alumni, who welcome students for an up-close look at their practices.

"We have a fairly high concentration of alumni who have come back to practice medicine in San Angelo," Wilke said. "Most other schools don't have a network set up like we do. It is kind of a family atmosphere. It is their way of giving back to the community and to ASU. Of course, there are also other physicians involved."

Barnard was able to shadow Dr. Gregory Dunham, an obstetrician/gynecologist at Shannon Medical Center, while Bird shadowed locally with West Texas Medical Associates oncologist Dr. Fazlur Rahman.

"You really want to have at least 75-80 hours of shadowing before you apply to med schools because they want you to have seen a physician's life," Bird said. "You get to start really connecting with patients and see different aspects of medicine that you may not have thought of at the beginning."

Bird did some more shadowing when he interned at a Summer Pre-Medical Academy at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in the summer of 2007.

"We also did some service projects up there," Bird said. "We worked at the Alzheimer patient care unit and studied for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), which is huge. We even did a miniature gross anatomy lab. Working with cadavers for the first time, that was really eye-opening."

Through the ASU program, internships are also available with medical schools at the University of North Texas, UT-Medical Branch in Galveston, UT-



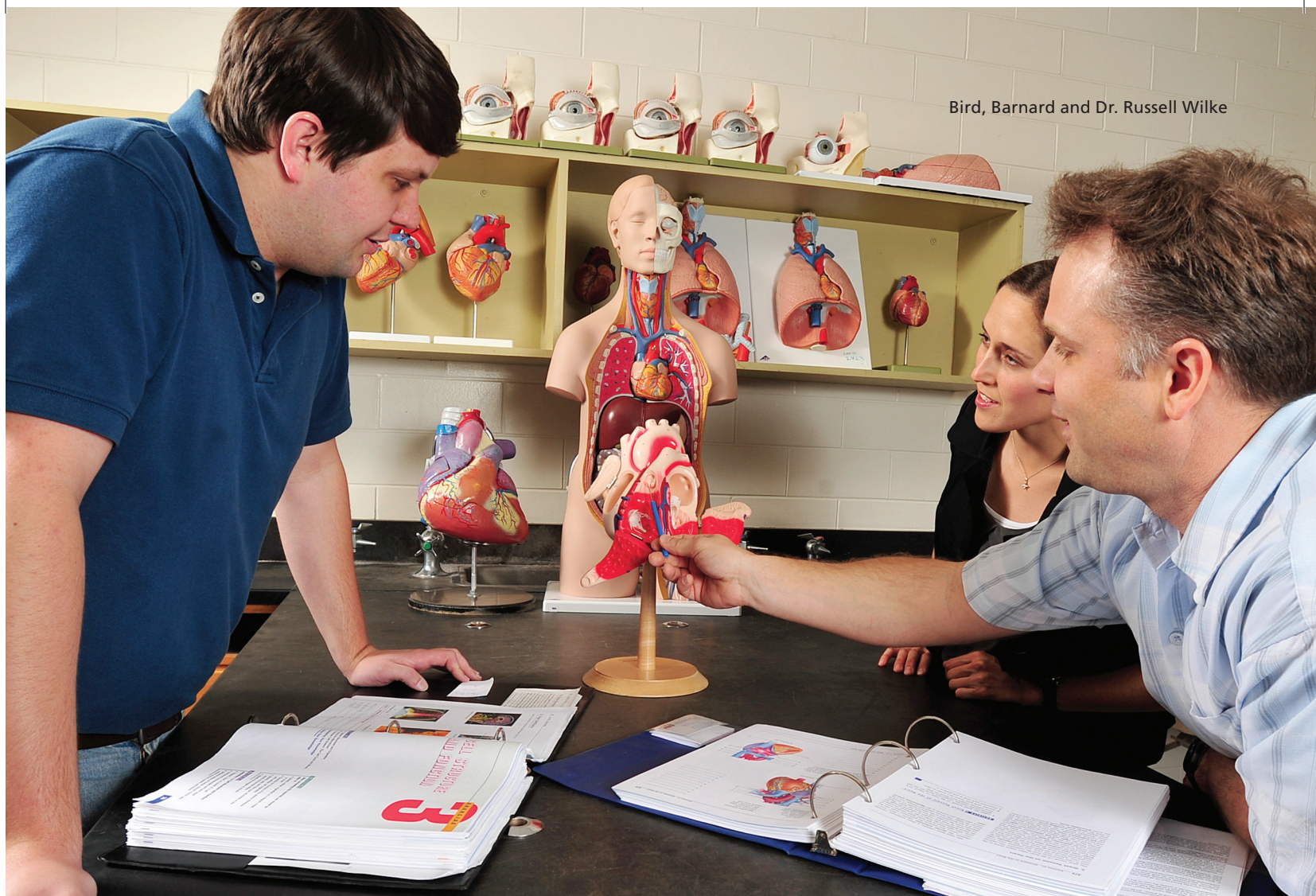


Photo by Danny Meyer

Houston and the Ambassadors of Science program in Washington, D.C.

As with other ASU undergraduates, pre-health students are also encouraged to partner with faculty on research projects.

"We have a DNA sequencer in the Biology Department and students are working in the Physics Department with high-powered lasers," Wilke said. "Those are things they would probably never get to do at a bigger institution. Research teaches independent work, problem solving and analytical skills, all things that medical and professional schools look for."

With an eye toward possibly becoming an oncologist, Bird jumped at the chance to do a related research project with Dr. Nick Flynn in the biochemistry lab.

"We actually cooked french fries in the lab," Bird said. "A carcinogen, or cancer-causing material, called acrilamyde is produced in all fried starchy foods. Using different kinds of oils, we tested to see if there was a significant difference in the level of its formation in french fries. The best kind of

oil we found was olive oil, which produced the lowest amount."

Job shadowing, internships, research projects and even study abroad are all avenues offered by ASU to help students advance toward medical school.

"Med schools, increasingly, are looking for more diverse individuals," Wilke said, "people who have been out of the country, who have seen other things, who have taken courses outside the sciences. Not only do they want the depth of the sciences, they also want this breadth of experiences the students can bring in. Research does that, study abroad does that, summer internships do that and so does public service, the opportunity for which is increasing on our campus."

Barnard has been able to combine her ASU experience with her two years of midwifery school as preparation to pursue her dream of becoming an obstetrician/gynecologist.

"I really enjoy working with women of all ages," Barnard said. "There is also something magical about getting to work with

families during that transition from not having kids to having kids. It is a very special time in life and an honor to be a part of."

But, it is not just all about the extracurricular activities. Pre-health students still need to have the academic tools to compete with students from larger universities for the limited number of medical school openings. That is where the ASU pre-health curriculum comes in.

"In our College of Sciences, the academics are very high-quality," Wilke said. "The students are often hesitant that they will not be able to compete with students from bigger schools, but they find that not only are they as good, often times they lead their classes in certain areas, like microbiology, histology and physiology. The content of the College of Sciences classes is really good."

The rigor of the ASU curriculum has already stood both Bird and Barnard in good stead and has given them confidence in their futures.

"At that Texas Tech summer academy, we would all take practice MCATs together



and we would all study together,” Bird said. “What I found was that the kids from the bigger schools had tended to be lectured to, based on what their professors were doing in their research, or they would just memorize the facts they needed and forget them afterwards. From ASU, it was me and another student, Matt Jackson, and we were two of the ones who actually knew the material from having learned it rather than just memorizing it.”

“When you go to interviews,” Barnard said, “they take you through anatomy labs and certain other rooms and situations. The tour guides would spout off things and several of the other students on the tour didn’t understand, but I did because it was all stuff we had already learned about. So, I didn’t have to pretend that I knew what was going on because I actually did. It makes you feel confident that you are prepared.”

For majors in the various sciences, ASU also boasts several award-winning student organizations that they are eligible to join in biology, physics, chemistry and math. Similar groups are available for non-science majors, of which there is a growing number. About 30 percent of ASU’s pre-health students major in fields outside the sciences. Recent graduates in history, journalism/communication, kinesiology, English and music have been accepted to medical school.

Regardless of their major, all of the students’ academic and other activities eventually lead up to their applications for medical school. That is where the HPAC plays its most important role as committee members formulate the evaluations/recommendations that accompany the applications.

“The students prepare a document that usually consists of a curriculum vita, a statement of why they want to go to whichever post-baccalaureate program and a list of their extracurricular activities,” said Dr. David Marsh, biology professor and HPAC member. “We also try to delve a little bit deeper and find out what kind of a person they are, what kind of skills they have and, particularly, what job shadowing they have done. Post-baccalaureate schools do not want to put the time and effort into educating you if you have no idea what you are getting into.”

Wilke actually pens the evaluations utilizing details and information discussed in meetings with HPAC members that currently include Marsh, Dr. Crosby Jones and Dr.

Connie Russell. Wilke recently took over the writing duties from the retired Dr. Alan Bloebaum and the transition has been seamless.

“We found out early on that, if you write a letter of recommendation, most of them are virtually identical,” Wilke said. “It is the evaluative part of our submissions that the med schools really value. They have consistently told us that they felt like they knew our students before they even got there. They feel like they already know them before they interview them and that is what they appreciate.”

“That is Alan Bloebaum’s legacy,” he added. “He started that tradition and it is what we try to continue.”

“At every interview I attended,” Bird said, “I had someone compliment me on the HPAC letter that was written for me. They felt that the people who wrote that letter really knew me and I wasn’t just a number to them. At the big schools there are people who write really good letters, but you can tell that they don’t really know the students as well as they do here.”

The combination of their own hard work and the dedication of their professors has landed Bird and Barnard in medical school. Both will start in July, Bird at Texas A&M and Barnard at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso. For Barnard, it is vindication of her choice to come to ASU.

“It is expensive to apply to medical schools,” Barnard said. “It is not just sending in your application and \$50, we are talking thousands of dollars. So, you want a school that is not only going to prepare you, but that is going to make sure that you are doing every possible step, that all your T’s are crossed and I’s are dotted, so that you know that you are taking your best shot at it. I found that here.”

For the professors, the quality of ASU students in the pre-health program is an easy justification for all their extra efforts.

“There are some incredible students that have come through this program,” Marsh said. “I would almost hate to be a student today. The bar has been raised and it is truly amazing.”

“We love teaching and part of teaching is the success of your students,” he added. “We are all dedicated to the success of our students and we do a lot of extracurriculars that benefit them. We truly care about the students.” ■

# Guiding Hands

**Job shadowing** local doctors constitutes one of the most important elements of Angelo State’s pre-health professions program.

Required of all potential applicants for medical, dentistry, optometry and chiropractic school, shadowing allows students to experience what life is really like for doctors in their chosen fields. It also gives students the opportunity to find which aspect of health care they may wish to pursue after they earn their bachelor’s degrees.

The local medical providers that welcome ASU pre-health students to shadow them provide an invaluable service to both the students and the university.

## 2009 Job Shadow Physicians

Dr. Michael Blanc	Cardiology
Dr. William Buche	Oral/Maxillofacial
Dr. Warren Conway	Family Medicine
Dr. Robert Danbert	Gastroenterology
Dr. Viki Forlano	Family Practice
Dr. Bruce Heare	Gastroenterology
Dr. Darrell Herrington	Family Practice
Dr. Robert LeGrand	Neurosurgery
Dr. Jack Lewright	General Dentistry
Dr. Jim (J.D.) Lummus	Podiatry
Dr. John Matthews	Optometry
Dr. Reagon Noble	Orthodontics
Dr. Reggie Noble	Orthodontics
Dr. Rick Roberts	General Dentistry
Dr. Randy Snyder	General Dentistry
Dr. Kelly Wilson	Obstetrics/Gynecology





Barrett Bowlin

Photo by Danny Meyer

# JAMPstart

**Angelo State's** Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP) has been helping send economically disadvantaged students to medical school for six years and, in the process, has become a model for programs at other universities around the state.

Established by the Texas Legislature in 2003, JAMP guarantees a paid college and medical school education for selected students who meet and maintain the financial and academic guidelines.

Senior Barrett Bowlin, a biology major from Snyder, learned about JAMP at a Discover ASU event. While he was a little leery of applying at first, he now has nothing but praise for the program.

"I didn't know if I wanted to do a biology major," Bowlin said. "I thought I might want to do a business major and, at the time, if I didn't misunderstand, for JAMP you had to do either a biology or math major. Back then I didn't realize all the benefits. Looking back now, I should have been all over this program from the start."

All students who apply for ASU's JAMP go through a rigorous freshman year that

includes mandatory tutoring in biology and chemistry, trips to professional meetings and medical school seminars, and monthly advising by Dr. Russell Wilke, JAMP director.

"We have to make sure that the students are academically successful," Wilke said. "We have found that the key factor or indicator whether they will succeed or not is if they do well academically their first fall semester. If they can make it through that first semester, they are likely to succeed later on because they have learned those study skills and what it takes to be successful in a college-level class."

To help get them through that first year, JAMP hopefuls get assistance from upperclassman pre-med mentors. Once their freshman year is completed, all eligible students are considered for one of ASU's two guaranteed slots in the state JAMP. A selection committee of physicians and admissions counselors from the participating medical schools interviews and selects the final candidates. The selectees receive a scholarship for their remaining college education, a stipend to attend summer intern-

ships at participating medical schools and mentoring and personal assistance from medical school personnel. Upon graduating from ASU, the students will receive admission and a scholarship to a Texas medical school.

ASU had four freshman applicants in fall 2008 and averages four-to-six per year, though as many as 15 have applied in a year. In February, ASU students Felisha Lopez of Ballinger, Omar Martinez of Vega and Alexandria Sharp of Kerrville were all accepted to the state JAMP.

While ASU is often granted more than the two slots it is guaranteed annually in the state JAMP, as happened this year, many eligible students do get left out. However, they still get to take advantage of the intensive freshman JAMP experience.

"Even those who are not chosen get the benefit of the program and many end up going to med school anyway via the traditional route," Wilke said. "The program really gives students that may not have an adequate background a chance to pursue that goal."

Though he was not a big fan as a freshman, Bowlin now sees the positives of the mandatory tutoring and mentoring. Consequently, he performs those functions for current freshman JAMP applicants. But, his favorite JAMP experience to this point was a summer internship at the Baylor College of Medicine.

"I was able to attend a MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) class and shadow on a general surgery floor, just walk from surgery to surgery," Bowlin said. "I also took some medical school classes, like anatomy and physiology. That internship was definitely the most beneficial thing to me."

"The JAMP program really puts you ahead of everybody else in your class," he added. "Where I have already been able to shadow and do extracurricular activities that you have to do your freshman year just to apply to JAMP, other students are trying to get into that now in their junior years."

Bowlin is scheduled to graduate in May 2010. Through JAMP, he will automatically apply to all nine Texas medical schools, which he will rank in order of preference. Right now, the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is at the top of his



list, as is his tentative plan to become an orthopedic surgeon.

ASU currently has six JAMP students in Texas medical schools. The university annually receives \$15,000 from the state to fund the JAMP and Wilke has answered numerous calls over the years from other university programs asking how best to spend their money. His recommendations have always been to provide tutors and mentors, elements that are now required by the state.

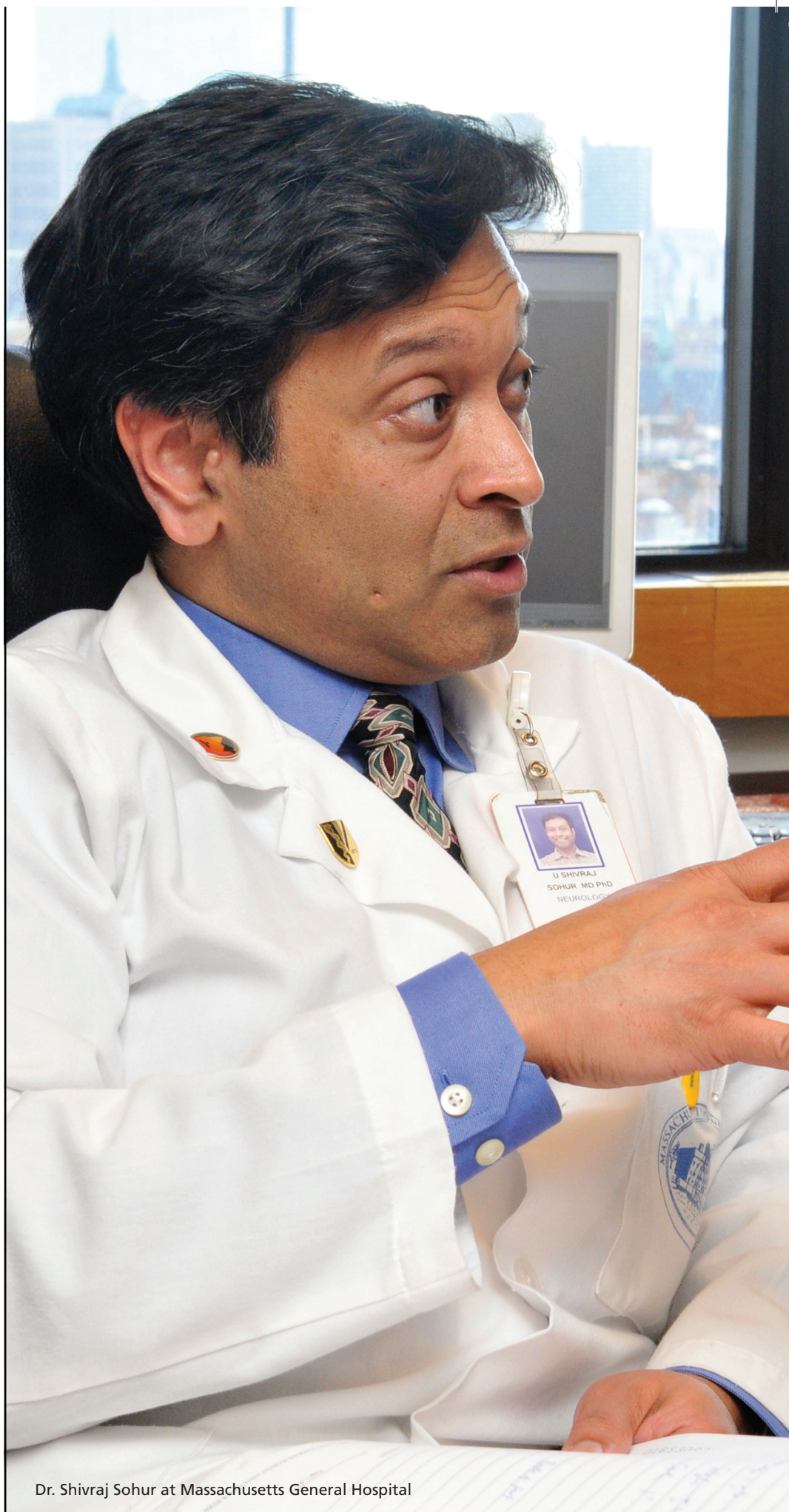
“We pay the tutors and mentors to provide their services to the JAMP students,” Wilke said. “We also provide study materials for the MCAT and things like calculators, USB drives and office supplies. We take the students on trips to medical schools, hospitals and professional meetings like the Texas Academy of Science. We bring in speakers and we just bought new computers for the students to use in the JAMP office.”

At ASU, any students who are admitted the first fall semester after their senior year of high school, score at least the state average on the SAT or ACT, are eligible for a Pell Grant and sign up for 15 credit hours, including biology and chemistry, can apply to JAMP. They can also major in any subject, as long as they complete the med school prerequisites in biology, chemistry, physics and math.

To raise awareness of the program, the state JAMP office in Austin distributes publicity materials to high schools throughout Texas. Wilke and his staff also work to ensure that Concho Valley students know about the program. Their efforts include making presentations at Discover ASU events, meeting with Region XV high school counselors, providing materials to ASU admissions recruiters and counselors, and attending area high school career days.

“The key has really been hitting the high school counselors and letting them know about the program,” Wilke said. “We have gotten several students that were told about the program by their counselors. They were interested in studying medicine, but didn’t think they could do it because they could not afford it.”

Because of JAMP, that is no longer the case for some Concho Valley students. ■



Dr. Shivraj Sohur at Massachusetts General Hospital



# Dream Worlds

by Tom Nurre

**Shivraj Sohur** abandoned his lifelong dream after he arrived at Angelo State University from Mauritius.

Instead of returning to his homeland as a family doctor to help his people, Sohur followed a career path that ultimately could help people all over the world recover from Parkinson's disease or even spinal injuries.

As a research scientist on the staff at the Massachusetts General Hospital-Harvard Medical School (MGH-HMS) Center for Nervous System Repair, Dr. Sohur today works on the frontier of medical science, trying to understand how certain brain cells degenerate and how stem/neural precursor cells, which have a remarkable ability to regenerate and even change their function within the body, could help counter that deterioration.

"My research program's long-term focus is to contribute to the understanding of how the main cells that degenerate in Parkinson's disease, called the substantia nigra dopaminergic neurons, develop during normal brain formation," Sohur said. "Our thought is that if we understand the molecular underpinnings of the normal development of these neurons, then down the road, we can invoke such programs to regenerate them to treat disease and injury."

However, that goal differs widely from the one Sohur had when he headed to West Texas from his native Mauritius, an island nation in the Indian Ocean about 400 miles east of Madagascar.

"I had come to ASU, young at heart, with the ambition to become the first American-trained country doctor practicing back in my native Mauritius," Sohur said. "Then one grows up and life happens. My mentors, such as Ed Drake in chemistry and Crosby Jones and Alan Bloebaum in biology, steered me gently towards research."

In addition to collaborating with Sohur on research projects, the professors helped him land a summer internship at Baylor University, where Sohur discovered his passion to become a physician scientist.

After graduating summa cum laude from ASU in 1992, Sohur entered the M.D./Ph.D. program at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Before heading to Vanderbilt, though, he returned to Mauritius, a trip that almost caused him to drop medical school altogether.

"The clarity of purpose that had long been a formidable stimulus vanished when I realized I was not coming back to Mauritius

if I were to be a physician scientist," Sohur said. "On a personal level, I was confused and distraught by new emotions that overpowered my mind. I had reached a breaking point. It was a dark period in my life."

Feeling defeated and experiencing a "time of great upheaval," Sohur said he was "saved by his new friends and mentors in Nashville," particularly Dr. David Robertson, head of the M.D./Ph.D. program.

"He told me that rather than be sad over the fact that I may not be going back to Mauritius, I ought to think of how I could be an ambassador for the places I come from, including Texas," Sohur said.

Having made peace with his life decision, Sohur graduated from Vanderbilt in 2000 and did a neurology residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School in Boston. He also completed an internship at the University of Maryland and its Veterans Administration (VA) hospital, where one particular experience led to an epiphany that he could become a doctor in the way he had envisioned as a teenager.

"There was a charge nurse at this VA, who was not on the favorites list of many house staff," Sohur said. "He was thought to be difficult, but I had gone through the whole year without any run-ins with him. On my last day at the hospital, he came up to me and said, 'Thank you for being one of the few to really care about our vets.'"

"I replied that I just did what was needed, but he said, 'You did more than what you had to do,' and shook my hand vigorously. I mumbled some thanks and walked away, strangely choked up. I knew then with certainty that in medicine, I had entered my zone. This was going to be my life and it was going to be great."

As his research career developed, several of Sohur's papers were published in various scientific journals, including *Southern Medical Journal*, *Cancer Research* magazine and *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society London: Biological Sciences*. His work has also been presented at research

Sohur photos by Paul Batista and Abram Bekker - MGH Photography

seminars at the University of Fribourg Biochemistry Institute and the Sero Pharmaceutical Research Institute in Switzerland as well as the International Basal Ganglia Society in the Netherlands and the American Association of Cancer Research Special International Conference on Programmed Cell Death in New York.

Also a neurologist at MGH and a member of the HMS faculty, Sohur may work 80 hours per week. With his wife, Suzanne, and two kids, Arjun and Raina, at home to take care of as well, Sohur says he keeps his passion alive by using his patients to drive him in the lab. He keeps on his top shelf the brain MRI scans of one patient who particularly inspired him, a Ms. Brown (pseudonym), who he describes as “a feisty and elegant 60-something” suffering from a rare form of Parkinsonian disease called corticobasal degeneration.

“The last time I saw Ms. Brown in clinic, she still wore her signature rose-colored lipstick, but in her eyes there was a vacant despair,” Sohur said. “She was wheelchair-bound, mute and inconsolable. She just held my hand tightly and cried. Soon after her demise, checks ranging from \$10-\$30 started showing up in our office with the header ‘Dr. Sohur Research Fund.’ It had been Ms. Brown’s final wish for contributions toward my research rather than flowers at her wake. That I was deeply moved is an understatement.”

“Patients like Ms. Brown are deep motivations for what I do,” he added. “In the end, given the current funding situation and economic outlook, if this endeavor of being a physician scientist does not work out, I feel I would be at peace that I gave it my very best. I think it is a great privilege to do what I do.”

That dedication and passion for both his patients and his research was first nurtured at Angelo State, where Sohur says he was molded into the man that he is today.

“If it had not been for my mentors in San Angelo, I would not have been swept away by research and directed into the path of the physician scientist,” Sohur said. “I use the elements of biology and chemistry I learned at ASU constantly. My masters at ASU, so many of them, graciously gave of their time to my development and I am eternally grateful for that.”

“In a larger context,” he added, “ASU and West Texas are the places where I grew as a thinking individual. They unleashed for me dreams I did not even know I harbored and wonders I did not even know existed.”

Ironically, Sohur almost did not come to ASU. Having already been accepted out of high school to medical schools at l’Académie de Versailles and University College London, he inquired about admission to some 90 schools in the U.S. simply as a back-up plan.

“There were thousands of accredited schools in the *Peterson’s Guide of Colleges*,” Sohur said. “So, I selected about 30 schools from the A-B-C list, another group from the middle letters of the alphabet and a last group from the terminal letters of the alphabet. To me they were just dots on the U.S. map. My two top considerations were University of Pennsylvania and ASU. The brochures sure looked nice for both those institutions.”

Since studying in France is somewhat of a tradition in Mauritius, Sohur was leaning toward l’Académie de Versailles. But, one of his teachers encouraged him to switch his priorities, making the U.S. his primary plan and Versailles his back-up. His father also encouraged him to give the U.S. a try.

“He had a clearer notion of my path, you might say,” Sohur said. “He felt America was the land that would fit my temperament. The Carr Academic Scholarship was the deciding

factor between UPenn and ASU. So I came to West Texas and made it my own country.”

While at ASU, Sohur was a member of the Student Senate, Beta Beta Beta Biology Honor Society, American Chemical Society, Alpha Chi National Scholarship Society and *Who’s Who Among American Colleges and Universities*. He was also the founder and president of the ASU East-West Fellowship and received both the Head of the River Ranch Prize in biology and the ASU Presidential Award as the top student in his graduating class.

More importantly, ASU was where he first discovered his love of research that has catapulted him onto the front lines of the battle against some of our most debilitating diseases.

“I figured that neuroscience was where the most number of black boxes of mystery existed and investing one’s efforts there would perhaps be a worthwhile adventure,” Sohur said. “My long-term vision is to help in solving some of the puzzles of neurodegenerative diseases and how we can reverse them in our patients.” ■



## Returning the Favor

Angelo State gave Dr. Shivraj Sohur a great start on his education and his career, and now he wants to give something back.

In recognition of the integral role ASU played in his own development, Sohur is determined to be involved in the university’s efforts to continue educating the doctors of tomorrow.

To that end, he worked with the selection committee to bring in his boss, Dr. Jeffrey Macklis, to ASU as the featured speaker for the 2008 West Texas Medical Associates Distinguished Lectureship in Science Honoring Dr. Roy E. Moon. As a member of Macklis’ staff, Sohur is at the forefront of research into potential treatments for Parkinson’s disease, spinal cord injuries and other neuromuscular ailments.

Currently, Sohur is working with the ASU Center for International Studies on a future study abroad program in his native Mauritius, an island nation off the southeast coast of Africa. He is also hoping to assist students in the ASU pre-health program by providing distance learning opportunities through video conferences he would conduct from Boston medical facilities where he works.

“I have taken the idea of giving back as a driving force,” Sohur said. “Time is the most precious commodity I have and I devote three-to-five hours a week to places that made me who I am, Mauritius, where I was born, and Texas, my adopted country.” ■





Dr. Joel Dunnington at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Photo courtesy of M.D. Anderson



## Clearing the air

**Dr. Joel Dunnington** has spent the last two decades working to make Texas smoke and tobacco-free.

Currently a professor of radiology, section chair of body imaging and director of gastrointestinal radiology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Angelo State alumnus Dunnington gets to see the dangers of tobacco firsthand in many of his patients.

"About 30 percent of the patients seen at M.D. Anderson are there simply because they smoke," he said.

While at medical school in the late 1970s, Dunnington became active in the American Medical Association (AMA) and spent 25 years working on AMA tobacco policies. But, he did not really become an activist until he joined the faculty at M.D. Anderson.

"My boss asked if I would work on the local Great American Smokeout," Dunnington said. "I then chaired the Houston Great American Smokeout. When I did that, I read some books on the tobacco companies and compiled some facts on tobacco for the physicians who helped me. As I read more and more, I learned what the tobacco companies had

been doing for 50 years. I decided that I would make tobacco control my area of research, but I am more of an activist than a pure researcher."

In his role as an activist, Dunnington has worked with and been a spokesperson for numerous state groups, like the Texas Medical Association and Texas Interagency Council on Smoking and Health, as well as national groups, including the American Cancer Society and Doctors Ought to Care (DOC), and similar organizations in other countries. He also wrote the *Tobacco Almanac*, a quick-reference guide to tobacco facts that is used as a resource by thousands of anti-smoking organizations, newsletters and Web sites.

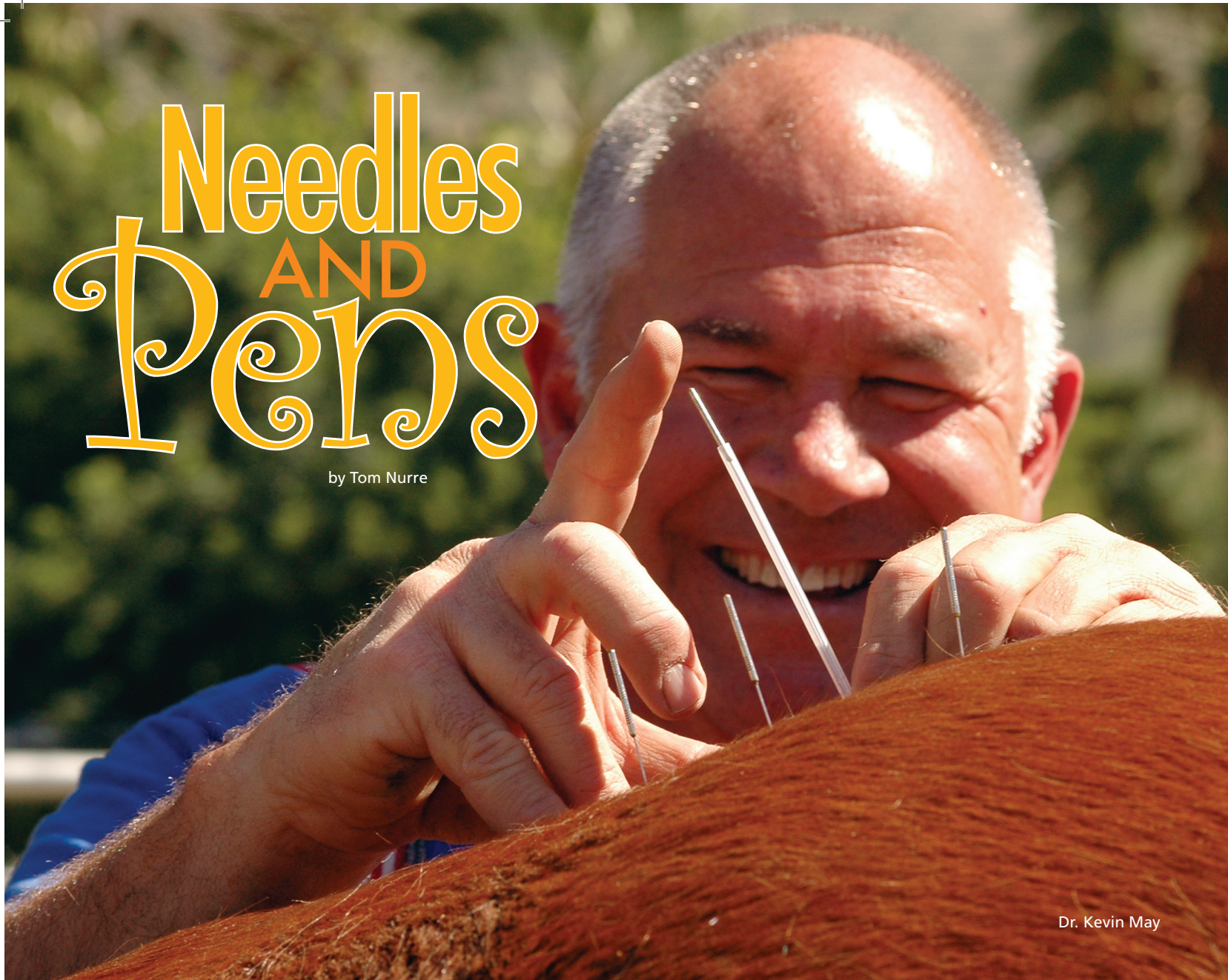
Dunnington became such a respected spokesperson and expert that he was asked to act as a consultant to the Attorney General for the Texas Tobacco Lawsuit. In recognition of his anti-tobacco efforts, Dunnington has also been honored with a Faculty Achievement Award in Prevention by M.D. Anderson, a Lifetime Achievement Award in tobacco control from the American Cancer Society and a C. Frank

— continued on page 35



# Needles AND Pens

by Tom Nurre



Dr. Kevin May

May photos by Jamie Romero



**A**ngelo State alumnus Kevin May has been known to needle animals.

No, he is not some sort of animal comedian, but rather he is Dr. Kevin May, a veterinarian in El Cajon, Calif., where he has been practicing since 1985 at the El Cajon Valley Veterinary Hospital (ECVVH), near San Diego.

“I am primarily a mobile equine veterinarian with special interests in equine acupuncture, chiropractic, dentistry and lameness,” May said. “Our hospital has been around since 1949 and is one of the only ‘mixed’ animal practices in San Diego County. As such, I also spend one day a week doing acupuncture and chiropractic on small animals.”

A native of Sudan in the Texas Panhandle, May spent many of his early years working on a farm, where he was responsible for the care, raising and showing of various animals. After graduating from ASU with his degree in animal science, he knew he wanted to be a vet, but did not know his interest in needles would take him out of state.

“I moved to Newhall, Calif., just north of Los Angeles, after I graduated from Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine to go to work as a vet in a ‘mixed’ practice,” May said. “I had no intentions of ever going to California, but there was an opportunity to work in a practice that offered veterinary acupuncture, which was a modality that I had gained interest in during my senior year of vet school.”



“Chiropractic was a natural progression,” he added. “Many veterinarians who do acupuncture sooner or later also learn to do chiropractic. The two modalities work so well together and they give me two more tools in my tool box to help treat my patients.”

In addition to his duties at ECVVH, May co-founded the Village Veterinary Clinic in nearby St. Vincent de Paul Village. For more than 20 years, the clinic has been providing vaccines for the pets of area homeless people.

On the other end of the animal scale is May’s work at the world-famous San Diego Zoo. Though he is not a zoo employee, on several occasions he has been called in to perform acupuncture on ailing zoo residents, including a famous pachyderm.

“It was the ‘baby’ elephant from the John Wayne movie ‘Hatari,’” May said. “In fact, that was the elephant’s name.”

But, May’s funniest story is the one about the lame camel at the zoo.

“The camel I treated, whose name I will not use to protect the innocent, was in with a bunch of female camels,” May said. “The zoo did not care because he was so lame he had not been able to breed with any of the females. Well, we started doing acupuncture on him and the end of a long story was – to everyone’s surprise – he fathered a baby camel. I would say that was a successful case!”

Certified in veterinary acupuncture since 1988, May was a founding member of the American Association of Veterinary Acupuncture (AAVA) in 1992 and served as president until 2000. He is also a member and past-president of the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS) and served as editor of the IVAS Equine and Canine Acupuncture Points instructional CDs.

As an expert and proponent of acupuncture, May has presented lectures and demonstrations throughout the U.S. and several other countries, including Australia, Germany, Italy and Grenada. One of his proudest professional moments was when he was invited back to Texas A&M to speak on acupuncture and chiropractic to the Student American Veterinary Medical Association’s annual meeting.

“Being asked to come back and speak at your alma mater is always an honor,” May said.

May also holds advanced certification in veterinary chiropractic and is a member of the International Association of Equine Dentistry. But, despite all his expertise, sometimes he still loses or has to put down a patient. To May, it is just part of the territory and something he has had to learn to deal with.

“When I am not able to save the life or have to take the life of one of my patients, you never really get over that,” he said. “You just go on, knowing that you did the best you could. Doing your best is the only way to overcome any challenge you might have.”

Learning to deal with challenges is something May traces back to his time at Angelo State. Coming from a Sudan High School senior class of only 23, he was looking for a smaller college where he would not get lost in the crowd, but could still get a quality education.

“I had been to ASU twice for track meets and loved the look of the campus,” May said. “So ASU was certainly one of the colleges I was looking at. One of my older cousins had also spent a summer semester at ASU. From my earlier impressions and his favorable report, I went and visited the campus. It only took one day and I was hooked.”

Though he jokingly says he “just got into ASU on his good looks,” May was quite involved in campus life. He was a founding member of the former Sigma Phi Epsilon (Sig Ep) fraternity and the Agriculture Department’s Block and Bridle Club. He was also on the University Center Program Council, but still found time to make the honor roll.

“I learned how to study and prepare myself for the future tasks of getting through veterinary school and through all of my professional challenges after that,” May said. “ASU and its staff provided more of a one-on-one relationship that helped me to grow and to be able to handle the trials ahead of me. I am so grateful for that opportunity.”

ASU is also where May developed his personal philosophy that he still passes on to any students he comes in contact with.

“When you wake up in the morning, even on your worst day, ask yourself this question, ‘what is it that I would not mind doing this morning?’ and then go for it,” May said. “For me, it was working with animals and if I was going to do that, it was going to be as a veterinarian.”

“After being in practice for 28 years,” he added, “I can honestly say that every morning – okay, almost every morning – I get up and go for it with a smile on my face and am so grateful for my career decision.”

May has passed his love of animals on to his stepdaughter, Calli. She is currently a student of St. George’s University School of Veterinary Medicine in Grenada, but is attending her last year of vet school at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. May and his wife, Marcy, also have some four-legged “children” – Babes the horse, Lucky the dog and Luvee the cat, which was hand-raised by Calli. In his spare time, May enjoys history, music, dancing, aerospace study and cheering for the San Diego Padres and Chargers. ■







# Raising



# the Bar

by Roy Ivey

**W**hen prospective law students seek advice from ASU assistant professor and pre-law adviser Jerry Perry, he offers them several pieces of wisdom.

"If I get them early enough," Perry said, "I tell them to choose whatever major they want. Law schools want good students who have certain skills. You've got to know how to write and read, how to think analytically and logically and, to some extent, how to talk."

Pre-law preparation has served ASU graduates well as many have gone on to attend top law schools including Harvard, Columbia, the University of Texas, Texas Tech University and Georgetown University. Each year, as many as three former ASU students report they have received law degrees from those and other law schools around the state and nation, Perry said.

Many alumni who attended law schools after taking pre-law preparatory courses at ASU have distinguished themselves in the legal and business worlds.

Among them are Melody Wilkinson, who was elected 17<sup>th</sup> District judge in Fort Worth in November; Laura Bayouth Popp, a Texas assistant attorney general; and Laurie Plessala Duperier, secretary of Tahirih Justice Center's board of directors in Washington, D.C. Until recently, Duperier was also Vice President and Associate General Counsel for Altria Client Services Inc., in Washington, D.C.

Brian Shannon is the Charles B. Thornton Professor of Law at Texas Tech;

Guy Choate and Carlos Rodriguez are partners in the San Angelo law firm of Webb, Stokes and Sparks; and Jon Bailey, a former ASU presidential award winner, practices law in San Angelo. Both Bailey and Choate have been named *Texas Monthly* Super Lawyers.

Others include Amos Barton, 198<sup>th</sup> district attorney in Brady; Laurie English, 112<sup>th</sup> district attorney in Ozona; and Kelby Hagar, a Harvard Law School graduate. Hagar is president and CEO of Dallas-based Digital Witness, LLC, a developer of software applications that enable businesses to utilize video surveillance technology.

Hagar said both Perry and Government Department head Ed Olson advised him, and he took what they told him to heart.

"Both of them were helpful to me," Hagar said. "I took lots of classes from Dr. Olson, such as presidential history, and everyone takes Mr. Perry's constitutional law class. They both wrote letters of recommendation and both were good advisers through that process."

"Dr. Olson strongly advised me to apply to some of the Ivy League schools and was chief advocate to get me to go to the best school," Hagar said. "He told me what I needed to do to get in and I set a course to get that accomplished. He may not realize how important he was in that process."

"I went to Harvard Law School believing I was going to be last in my class," he said. "Those were Ivy League kids who had the best education money could buy. I thought I would be happy to just be last in my class at Harvard, but after I took some



Jerry Perry





Kyle Ratliff, left, and Manny Campos

Photo by Danny Meyer

classes, I realized I was just as prepared as they were and graduated with honors. I think I got a great education at ASU.”

Hagar said he could point to four professors who were keys to his success, including Perry and Olson in Government and retired professors Phil Holcomb in English and Kurt Berger in accounting.

“Mr. Perry’s constitutional law class was almost repeated at Harvard,” Hagar said. “Charles Fried, who served on the Massachusetts Supreme Court, taught it. Mr. Perry’s class stood right up next to his.”

Following Hagar to the prestigious Cambridge, Mass., campus is another ASU graduate, Jamie Ryan. The current law school student received a math degree at ASU where his mother, Betsy Ryan, teaches accounting.

Perry said, “Jamie made the highest score on the LSAT (law school admissions test) that anyone here at ASU has made for years.”

Perry told Ryan he should aim for the top after completing his degree with a 3.9 grade point average and scoring 172 out

of a possible 180 on the LSAT, which put Ryan in the top 1.1 percent in the nation.

Several students who have sought advice have found it useful whether they planned to go into law or another profession that utilizes knowledge gleaned from government courses.

Kyle Ratliff, a senior government major from Seminole, plans to attend law school and practice international or corporate law. He will take the LSAT in June.

“I have some political aspirations and considered public policy courses,” Ratliff said. “While I do plan to go to law school, I do not know I will practice law. That will open up doors for me if I choose state government jobs working in politics. A lot of people go to law school based on the idea that they can save the world. I believe that I can make a difference even though this profession has been kind of downgraded in prestige.”

“There are people in the profession who work for the greater good,” he said. “I plan to be one of those and do whatever small thing I can for the community.”

Ratliff added, “Mr. Perry has been an expert in constitutional law for 30-plus years, and that has been invaluable to me. I couldn’t have gone anywhere else and gotten a better education. I have learned from some of the best and most knowledgeable people in the field.”

Manny Campos, a Sonora graduate student with an ASU degree in government, is working on a master’s in public administration. He said he is not looking at law school but found the pre-law courses advantageous in his plan to work in municipal government and, possibly, to run for public office.

“I took all those courses,” Campos said. “I got an appreciation and more thorough understanding of the Constitution that continues to impact us. Government has been interesting to me. I started out as a music person and took Dr. (Casey) Jones and Mr. Perry’s courses. I was amazed at how they made government interesting. It pretty much changed my outlook.”

Senior government and history major Matt Bauer from Rockdale plans to pursue a career in corporate law after graduating in December and taking a year to focus on the LSAT. Bauer said the tight-knit ASU pre-law group members know each other and work with several professors.

“It’s not only Mr. Perry preparing you,” Bauer said. “The whole Government Department is preparing you. Dr. (Walter) Noelke, Dr. Jones, Dr. (Roberto) Garza, all of them know about law and government. It’s like a family. If you look at government, they are on top of their game. They give you knowledge you wouldn’t have gotten on your own. You couldn’t ask for much more.”

Students interested in pre-law preparation come primarily from the Government Department, but can come from any department on campus, Perry said. Although pre-law is not an official program at ASU, Perry counsels students to take his two constitutional law courses and a course in judicial process and behavior.

“You don’t have to take those courses to go to law school,” Perry said, “but they are good because they give you a little taste of what law school is like. I tell kids, ‘if you don’t like that little taste, or you’re



not good at it, then you probably don't want to go to law school. Law school is not for everybody. That's not a bad comment about anyone. It's just saying you need to do something your mind is more in tune with."

Perry, who plans to retire this year, also offers students something more immediate to think about when they are setting up schedules.

"I give them a little advice on choosing instructors and courses to take as undergraduates," said Perry. "No department has a monopoly on good teachers or good courses. They are going to help you learn the skills you need to do well in law school. Some are in the Government Department; some are in the History Department; some are in English, and so forth."

"Everybody has to take the LSAT," Perry said. "It's a skills exam, not a content exam. You don't have to have had any certain courses to do well on the LSAT. You need to do well on the reading comprehension questions. The questions they

ask are not like 'in line four, the author says...' That's too easy. They are going to say, 'the author implies...' and you have to read between the lines."

Advanced English composition courses and philosophy courses also prove helpful.

"Most of us don't know how to write as well as we should," Perry said, "and philosophy courses, especially in logic, are good."

Perry helps students prepare for the LSAT and do well on it.

"I tell them there are several things they can do on their own to prepare for it," Perry said. "They can do self-study and then there are prep courses that they can take which are prepared by lawyers. They know the LSAT and can help you learn how to prepare for the different parts of it, which don't vary from year to year."

The test typically has questions and an essay, but the essay does not affect the applicant's LSAT score.

"The LSAT people don't do anything with the essay but send it to the law schools," Perry said. "What I tell students

is, 'If your essay shows you are illiterate, you can't spell cat and you can't write a simple sentence with a subject and verb that agree, I don't care how well you do on the LSAT. They probably are not going to admit you because they can't teach you how to write.'"

He said the essays don't have to be perfect, because everyone misspells words or makes errors in grammar and sentence structure, but between two applicants who are close on the LSAT, law schools might choose the one who writes a superior essay.

Two other factors that can play into a successful application to law school are coming from an economically deprived background or being a nontraditional student.

"If you are the first member of your family to earn a college degree, had to work a lot and didn't have a lot of financial support, those things can enter the picture," Perry said. "Your racial identity also can still be a factor when applicants are about the same. Affirmative action doesn't mean admitting unqualified people. If your score on the LSAT and GPA are lousy, your race or ethnicity is not going to matter even though law schools have tried to make their classes more diverse."

Perry occasionally gets nontraditional students in their 30s or 40s who have been in the workforce and come back to get an undergraduate degree with an eye on the legal profession.

"They'll ask me about the age thing," he said, "and I'll surprise them a lot of the time because I tell them that their age might be in their favor. Law schools consider that as part of the diversity they want."

He stressed, however, that the four-year college grade point average and the score on the LSAT go a long way to help students get into law school. Along with good academic numbers, letters of recommendation written by people who have personal knowledge of the applicants smooth the way to a top-quality law degree and a rewarding career. ■



Matt Bauer, left, and Jerry Perry

Photo by Danny Meyer



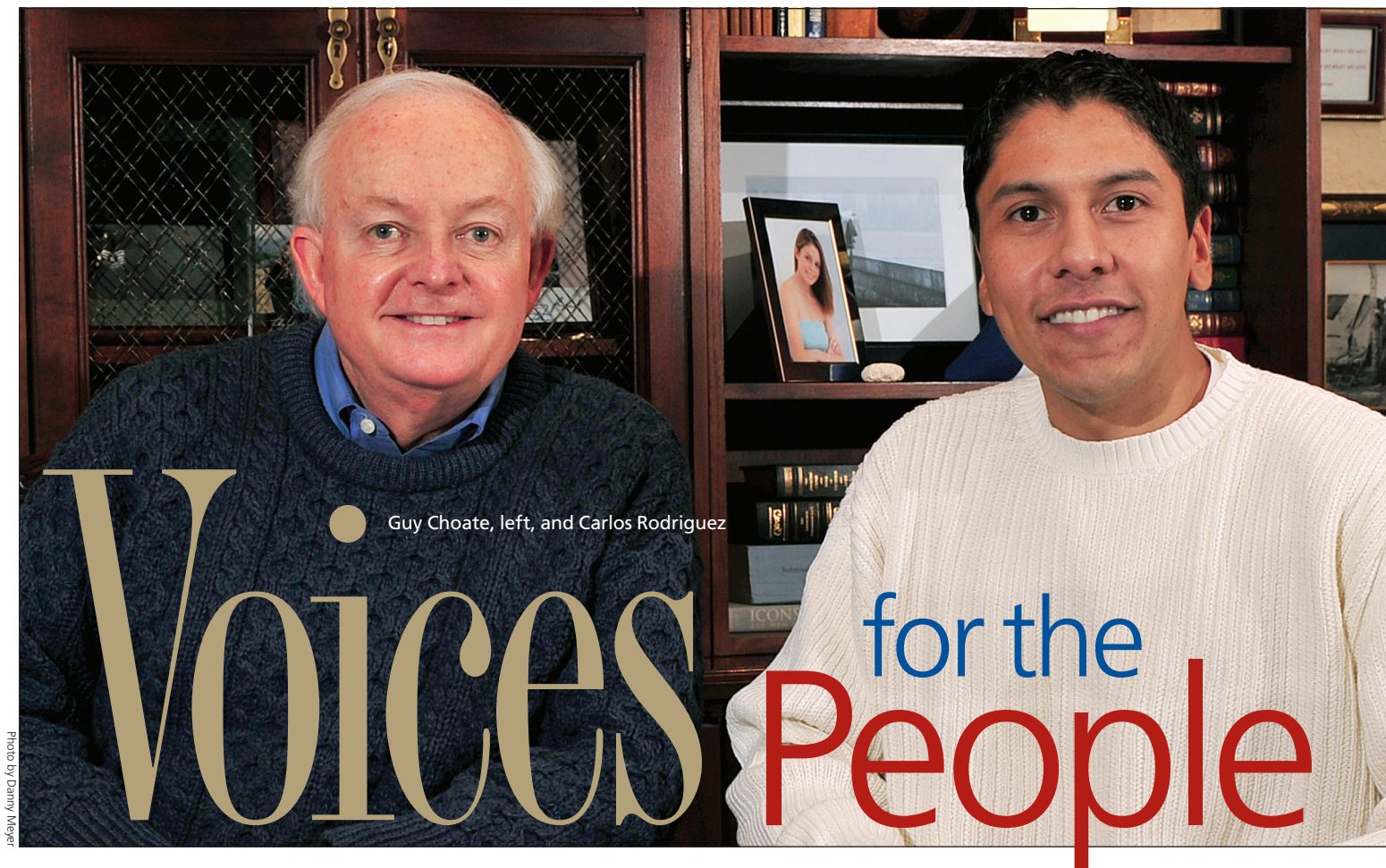


Photo by Danny Meyer

● Guy Choate, left, and Carlos Rodriguez

# Voices for the People

by Roy Ivey

## Guy Choate and Carlos Rodriguez

represent different generations of ASU students, but they share the same vision in their law practice: To speak for the “little guy” in court.

The partners in the San Angelo law firm Webb, Stokes and Sparks exclusively represent plaintiffs as litigators in personal injury, insurance and business litigation.

“I found it was better to represent human beings, people who had been hurt,” Choate said. “Litigating is really where my talents lie. We represent people who, without us, would have no chance against major corporations. When General Motors, Ford or some big oil company injure someone, they’re not inherently evil, but they are corporations and they are set up to maximize profits.”

“If there is no one there with the means to require corporations to compensate people that they have injured,” Choate said, “they will not compensate them. It’s not part of their business model, so we must have the means and capability to establish an even playing field.”

Rodriguez added, “We’re representing our clients’ positions verses a defendant’s. We’re their voice in the courtroom, and we

argue legally and factually why our client should be awarded damages by a jury.”

Choate said the most satisfying part of his profession is working within a system that helps people get their lives back on track or, at least, gives them a chance to be heard.

“Every once in a while, you get a chance to really get involved with clients and their families, and to set something right that has been terribly broken,” Choate said. “You can’t bring the dead back to life and you can’t re-grow a leg. You can’t make a back strong again, but you can give people a real sense they have had their day in court, that the system worked for them, that they were listened to.”

Though the firm would like every case to be successful, even when they are not, it can still be gratifying.

“We tried one case to a jury verdict,” Choate said. “It was a very tough legal issue that we had to overcome, were not able to and lost. Through all that, our clients were very appreciative that they had their shot. They were treated with respect by the court and by the other lawyers. We gave them a good trial, we got all the evidence in that we could and we just lost.”



Rodriguez recalled a car wreck case where the outcome was more favorable.

"I tried one last year with very tough facts for a very nice and humble gentleman," Rodriguez said. "We tried it to a jury and got more than he had been offered to settle his claim. The verdict was definitely more than he would have received if he had not stood up to the adverse insurance company, gone over to the courthouse, teed it up and tried it. I still see him from time to time. He always comes over and says 'hi.' It felt good to have been able to help him"

Besides directly working with cases, Choate also works through state entities to protect the rights of the individual. He was president of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association in 2005 and continues to be active in the organization. As president, he spent much time in the Texas Legislature on consumer rights issues.

"I essentially lived in Austin that year," Choate said. "During the Texas Legislative session, you've got to be there every day and come back quite a bit when it's off season."

Much of that time was spent trying to ward off laws that favor big business over the consumer, he said. He lamented immunities that his group failed to stop from being passed.

"Everybody has got some good reason why they should be immune from being liable for what they do," Choate said. "When you start doing it for free, come see me. As long as you are making a profit, you should pay for those you injure or kill."

Choate and Rodriguez both are proud of the strong work ethic they honed while at ASU. Both were government majors and Rodriguez earned a minor in psychology and sociology while Choate took a history minor.

"I worked a lot when I was in school at ASU," Choate said. "I worked 84 hours a week one semester as a night watchman with 12-hour shifts, but I enjoyed my classes. Probably 90 percent were English, government and history, and I really learned a lot. To this day, I go back and think about things I learned in school and the foundations it gave me."

"ASU has a little different student population than some places," Choate said. "You've got a lot of kids who work their way

through, doing it on their own and doing it on loans. They are people that you have tremendous respect for because they are going to make it."

Rodriguez fell in that category during his years at ASU.

"I worked fulltime in order to pay for my school," Rodriguez said, "so I took it very seriously. I took a few years off before I decided to go to college. I worked in the real world for awhile, so that was motivation to buckle down and study hard. I enjoyed being in the classroom and learning. It was, and is, the marketplace of ideas."

Both recalled some of their favorite classes were taught by longtime ASU government professors Jerry Perry and Dr. Walter Noelke.

"They were two of the best professors I ever had," Choate said. "I still think about what Noelke taught me as it relates to (opposing natural law theorists) Locke and Hobbes and (Scottish philosopher David) Hume and Perry taught a much better Constitution law class than I had in law school."

Rodriguez echoed his partner's comments, "They gave me a run for my money."

After graduating *summa cum laude* from ASU, Rodriguez earned his law degree at the University of Texas in Austin. He joined Webb, Stokes and Sparks in 2003, and became a partner in 2008.

Choate graduated *cum laude* from ASU in 1975 and earned his law degree in 1978 from the University of Houston where he was inducted into the Order of the Barons Honor Society, a student-run scholastic group at UH. After joining Webb, Stokes and Sparks in 1982 and becoming a partner in 1984, Choate was named a super lawyer by *Texas Monthly* magazine in 2003-04 and 2006 and a fellow by the Texas Bar Association.

While their careers take up much of their time, the law partners step away from their law books and court cases when their schedules allow.

"For years, I roped and played polo," Choate said. "More recently, I've been playing guitar in a band called 'Old School,' but that name is subject to change."

Choate said that he and his band mates play everything from blues and country to rock and roll. They've played gigs at the Sealy Flats venue in downtown San An-

gelo, at weddings and for the San Angelo Schools Foundation.

Rodriguez takes his leisure time on the basketball court and in the outdoors.

"I like my basketball," he said. "I like being outdoors and play pickup games when I can. Even in law school, I was always playing in intramurals – flag football, softball and basketball."

Besides that, Rodriguez serves as the president of the Texas Exes San Angelo chapter and is on the Board of Advocates and membership committee for the Texas Trial Lawyers Association.

Closer to home, Rodriguez serves as a board member for the Boys and Girls Club, giving back to the organization he said kept him off the streets as a youngster and helped guide him to the path he walks today.

"Having grown up in the Boys and Girls Club," Rodriguez said, "it's one I hold close to my heart. Back then, it wasn't as organized as it is today. It's come a long way. The board members in the past have done a lot in order to have better facilities and better programs for the kids. When I was going to it, the Boys and Girls Club was mainly a place where we just went and hung out with people our own age. We were off the streets and safe. It still does that, but now there are educational-type programs and even computers."

Rodriguez also is involved in Right Choices for Youth, which advocates abstinence and avoiding drug use.

"The name kind of says it all," Rodriguez said, "to educate the youth on how to make good decisions."

Both Choate and Rodriguez said that even in their youth, they wanted to become lawyers.

"I don't remember ever wanting to do anything else," Choate said. "I was fairly rare at law school in always wanting to be a lawyer and, at the same time, not really having a clear idea what lawyers did, even when I was in law school. I learned what lawyers really do after I got out of law school. That's all I ever wanted to do, so it was easy for me."

"As a kid," Rodriguez said, "I knew I wanted to be a lawyer, but I had no clue what a lawyer did. You really don't know what it entails until you start practicing and helping people," he said. "It can be tough at times, but it's a very gratifying profession." ■

# Man With a Cause

**Brian Shannon** embraces two great passions in his life – advocacy for people with disabilities and teaching law.

The Angelo State University alumnus and Charles “Tex” Thornton Professor of Law at the Texas Tech University School of Law was drawn to advocacy after he saw his parents struggle to get proper care for his brother, Greg, who was diagnosed with a mental illness in 1985.

“I think his illness impacted the entire family,” Shannon said. “My parents both became tireless advocates.”

His mother, Jackie Shannon, became president of NAMI-Texas, the state affiliate for the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and then president of the national organization. His father, the late Dr. Charley Shannon, who was a longtime physical education professor and coach at ASU, also was involved in NAMI and on the boards of the Concho Valley MHMR Center and River Crest Hospital.

“Happily, modern medications have improved and my brother has done a terrific job coping with his brain disease,” Shannon said. “These mental illnesses are treatable and for most people, treatment can and does work.”

He also works for people with mental illness through boards and committees including the Lubbock Regional MHMR Center board and as an appointee on Texas Gov. Rick Perry’s committee on people with disabilities.

Shannon has seen many changes in the Americans with Disabilities Act that went into effect in 1990.

He said the intended scope of the original ADA was narrowed by a series of court decisions that limited some of the remedies and opportunities that Congress had envisioned when the act was first adopted during President George H.W. Bush’s administration.

“In late 2008, however, the Congress passed and President Bush signed into law, a significant set of amendments to the ADA

that restored much of the original intent and provided clarifying language,” Shannon said. “These changes should provide greater opportunities for persons with disabilities who are otherwise qualified.”

Shannon also became involved in a high-profile case involving former pro golfer Casey Martin, who wanted to use a cart during tournament play to accommodate a congenital medical condition. Shannon’s wife, Jeannine, urged him to volunteer to help in the case because their daughter, Julia, has the same disability as does Martin.

Shannon prepared amicus curiae briefs for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled 7-2 in favor of Martin who played for a year on the PGA tour but had to quit because of pain. He now coaches golf for the University of Oregon.

Shannon, who has been the Thornton Professor of Law at the Texas Tech since 2000 and served a six-year stint as the law school’s associate dean for academic affairs, continued his family’s advocacy legacy through the practice of law and by writing myriad articles and books on mental illness and the law.

His latest publication is the fourth edition of the *Texas Criminal Procedure & The Offender with Mental Illness: An Analysis & Guide*, which he co-authored with Texas Tech law school colleague Dan Benson. The project was funded through the Texas Bar Foundation.

Shannon puts the same passion for mental illness rights into his classroom lectures where he teaches contract law, law and psychiatry and various courses such as property and criminal law.

“I believe that, first and foremost, a lawyer should be a problem-solver,” Shannon said. “In teaching my students, I try to encourage them not only to learn the substantive aspects of legal subjects, but also to be professionals who will work hard for their clients and be ethical while doing so.” ■

Brian Shannon

Photo by Artie Limmer, Texas Tech



# Bench Strength

**Melody Wilkinson** wanted to be a lawyer when she was 5 years old, but she took a little longer to aspire to the bench.

The newly elected 17<sup>th</sup> District judge in Fort Worth said that as a child she displayed the attributes it takes to argue a case in a court of law.

“My grandmother said I was so sassy, I would be a good lawyer,” Wilkinson said, “and I always wanted to be a lawyer. When I was 14, I started working for lawyers as a runner.”

The Crowley native said she made trips to the courthouse to file petitions and did office filing among other duties at a law firm to get a taste of the legal profession.

“The thing that cemented it for me, though, was going to Angelo State University, which had some fabulous government professors,” said Wilkinson.

She graduated summa cum laude from ASU in 1985 with a bachelor’s degree and a double major in government and English.

Two of her favorite professors in the Government Department were Jerry Perry and current department head Dr. Ed Olson, who also served as her adviser.

Wilkinson doesn’t remember what initially drew her to ASU but said it was the only college to which she applied.

“I thought it was a great way to get an education and went there as a Carr Academic Scholar and on a twirling scholarship,” she said.

After earning her law degree from the Texas Tech University School of Law, Wilkinson conducted a legal career in Tarrant County. She has been an active litigator since 1988 in commercial cases, product liability, labor law and professional malpractice.

In the circle of life, Wilkinson’s first trial almost 20 years ago was in the court where she now sits as judge. The new direction in her life came sooner than she thought it would.

“I thought I might run,” she said, “but I didn’t have any immediate plans. When

Judge (Fred W.) Davis announced he would retire, it became a crowded race. I thought the timing wasn’t really right for me. Then one candidate dropped out and I got a ton of phone calls encouraging me to get into the race.”

Wilkinson won a hard-fought Republican primary and then defeated her Democratic opponent in November.

Wilkinson is a leader in both the legal community and in her city. She served on the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors and has been the Tarrant County Bar Association’s president.

Fort Worth also has benefited from Wilkinson’s activism with her work in the YMCA, the Fort Worth Parks and Recreation Department’s Sports Advisory Council as well as with youth volleyball and basketball in her church.

Jan (Turner) Hueber, who knew Wilkinson at ASU, then at Texas Tech law school and as an attorney in Fort Worth, said Wilkinson has been a beacon as long as she has known her.

“She’s always been a born leader,” Hueber said. “People follow her and listen to her because she is so impartial and measured. That translates into being a terrific lawyer. As a judge, she will be outstanding because she is fair and will listen to both sides.”

Hueber said she could even see that flair for leadership in Wilkinson when they were at ASU.

“She was a leader in student government, her sorority and in the classroom,” Hueber said. “She was studious and smart. I knew without a doubt that she would do things that would impact people as she got older.” ■



Melody Wilkinson

Photo Courtesy of Glen E. Ellman Photography, Fort Worth

# Rams Rising



Lionel Brown

**For the first time** in eight seasons, the Angelo State men's basketball team earned 20 wins and advanced to the NCAA Division II National Tournament.

"If I had to describe this year's team in one word, it would be 'outstanding,'" said Rams basketball coach Fred Rike. "We accomplished two of the goals we set at the beginning of the season of making the regionals and winning 20 games. We would have liked to have gone farther into the tournament, but that is a goal for next year."

ASU put the league on notice that this year's team would be different from those in the recent past as it began the season winning the first seven games, one short of the school record. The Rams finished the year with a 20-9 record and placed second in the Lone Star Conference's South Division with an 8-4 mark, the most league wins in eight seasons.

ASU advanced to the NCAA D-II National Tournament for the fourth time in program history and for the first time since the 2000-01 campaign. In a bid for their first NCAA tournament victory, the Rams suffered an 89-84 loss to No. 7-ranked Southwest Baptist to end the season.

Thanks to ASU's strong start, the Rams were ranked in the top 25 by the time they began South Division Play, marking their first national ranking in seven seasons. Later in the season, ASU re-appeared in the poll at No. 23, the highest ranking in school history. The road to the postseason proved difficult as the Rams played in three overtime games this year, including a marathon 85-80 quadruple-overtime home win over Tarleton State, the longest game in school history.

"I have always said the Lone Star Conference is one of the toughest leagues in the country," Rike said. "Four teams from our conference, including three from the South Division, made the regional field. We definitely earned our spot in the tournament."

Three Rams received postseason honors for their on-court accomplishments. Senior Lionel Brown was named first team All-LSC South and Division Newcomer of the Year, National Association of Basketball Coaches All-District first team and Daktronics All-South Central Region second team. Senior Ryan Bennett was named second team All-LSC South while senior Malik Motnii received an All-LSC South honorable mention nod. ■

## March Sadness

**The 'Belle basketball team** this year made a ninth straight appearance in the Lone Star Conference postseason tournament, but failed to make the NCAA Division II national tournament for the first time in eight years.

The 'Belles opened the season with four straight losses, their worst start in a decade, but still managed to rebound during conference play to advance to the LSC Basketball Tournament in Bartlesville, Okla., in March.

After the 0-4 start, the 'Belles bounced back with wins in nine of their next 11 games, including a dramatic 82-75 victory at nationally ranked Central Oklahoma prior to the start of divisional play. ASU then posted a 7-5 mark in division competition, qualifying for the LSC Tournament as the No. 3 seed from the South. The season ended in the LSC tournament's first round with an 81-76 loss to Southeastern Oklahoma.

"It was a frustrating season," said ASU women's basketball coach Sally Walling Brooks. "We never played up to our potential on a consistent basis. Camille (Perkins) had another good year and we had some freshmen show a lot of potential. We will have to work hard to get this program back on top."

For the second straight season, sophomore guard Perkins was named to the All-LSC South First Team after leading the 'Belles in scoring with nearly 14 points per game. Senior center Ann Parks was named honorable mention All-LSC South, averaging 10 points and seven rebounds in her final campaign. Senior Lauren Weishuhn and junior Lindsey Leatherman were each honored for their work on and off the court with their selections to the LSC's Commissioner's Honor Roll. ■



Alix Flores

Photos by Danny Meyer



# Rams Bulk Up

**Angelo State football** coach Dale Carr has signed 24 high school players and eight junior college transfers to join the Rams this fall.

"This is by far the best signing class we've had at ASU since I arrived," said Carr, who will be in his fifth season at the helm of the Rams this fall. "This is the strongest, fastest and most prepared class that has come to San Angelo in the past five seasons. Plus, they're not just strong on the field but also in the classroom. That is something we're very proud of."

Among his high school signees, Carr

added 13 on offense and 11 on defense. The Rams picked up four offensive linemen, four wide receivers, two tight ends, a full-back, a running back and a quarterback on offense. On defense, ASU added four linebackers, four defensive backs and three defensive linemen.

The Rams also picked up eight junior college transfers who were on campus this spring. The transfers include four offensive players, three defenders and a kicker.

The Rams open the 2009 season Aug. 29, against Texas A&M-Commerce in San Angelo Stadium.

## 2009 High School Signees

C.J. Akins	6-0	175	WR	Harker Heights (Harker Heights)
LaVaughn Andrews	6-0	200	DE	Keller (Fossil Ridge)
Anthony Brown	6-0	165	DB	Austin (Travis)
TerRe' Camille	5-10	195	LB	Houston (Westfield)
Caleb Carr	6-1	200	LB	Grand Prairie (Arlington Bowie)
Tyler Crouch	5-10	215	LB	Eules (Colleyville Heritage)
Landon Dockery	5-11	230	FB	Cedar Park (Cedar Park)
Doug Franklin	6-2	225	TE	Tyler (Lee)
Blake Hamblin	6-2	195	QB	Rowlett (Rowlett)
Jarron Harris	6-3	210	DE	Cedar Park (Leander)
Devown Hines	5-11	190	RB	Houston (Mayde Creek)
Joseph Knight	6-1	175	WR	Corinth (Lake Dallas)
A.J. Mackey	6-2	290	OL	Copperas Cove (Copperas Cove)
Austin Mayes	5-11	235	DL	Houston (Westfield)
Nekechie Miller	6-0	170	DB	Leander (Leander)
Courtney Moore	5-9	190	DB	Pflugerville (Austin Johnson)
Exelle Osborne	6-2	175	WR	Houston (North Shore)
Dakarai Pecikonis	5-11	165	WR	Allen (Allen HS)
Cory Smith	6-5	270	OL	San Antonio (Clark)
Richard Stogner	6-3	295	OL	Cisco (Cisco)
Austin Sumrall	6-7	290	OL	Katy (Katy)
Jacob Velasquez	6-3	225	TE	Bonney (Angleton)
Pat West	6-2	240	LB	Houston (Cypress-Woods)
Dekkar Williams	5-10	185		Austin (McNeil)

## 2009 Transfers (all juniors)

Aqura Brown	6-0	205	QB	College of the Siskiyous (Calif.)
Gabe Elizondo	5-10	160	K	Navarro College
Elliot Howell	6-1	280	OL	Navarro College
V'Keon Lacey	6-4	205	WR	Cisco J.C.
Devin McDonald	6-3	240	DL	Navarro College
Johnathon Norcott	6-0	195	FB	Dean College (Mass.)
Terrance Preston	6-0	175	DB	Cisco J.C.
Cornelius Rosenbaum	6-4	250	DL	Trinity Valley C.C.



Photo by Danny Meyer

## 2009 Football Schedule

<b>Aug. 29</b>	<b>Texas A&amp;M-Commerce</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b>
Sept. 5	at Texas State	TBA
<b>Sept. 12</b>	<b>Southwestern Okla.</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b>
Sept. 19	at East Central	TBA
<b>Sept. 26</b>	<b>Midwestern State</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b>
	(Family Day)	
Oct. 3	at Eastern N.M.	TBA
<b>Oct. 10</b>	<b>Abilene Christian</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b>
	(Homecoming)	
Oct. 17	at Southeastern Okla.	TBA
Oct. 24	at West Texas A&M	6 p.m.
<b>Oct. 31</b>	<b>Tarleton State</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b>
	(Military Appreciation Day)	
Nov. 7	at Texas A&M-Kingsville	7 p.m.



# alumni association news

## a taste of ASU

### When the ASU Alumni Association

board of directors joined with their counterparts from Texas Tech to sponsor Texas Tech University System Day at the State Capitol in February, they decided to put on a show for legislators with a Taste of Texas reception in the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum the night before Legislative Day activities.

In addition to some 150 ASU alumni and supporters, the reception drew a bevy of legislators, including State Rep. Drew Darby of San Angelo and State Sen. Robert Duncan of Lubbock, as well as newly appointed Texas Tech Regent Mickey Long, Class of '76, TTUS Chancellor Kent Hance and ASU President Joseph C. Rallo.

But even with the high-powered turnout, the real stars that night turned out to be the ASU students who catered the reception, provided the live music and accompanied the system delegation the next day to meetings with state legislators and their staff members.

"From the very beginning of the planning discussions," said association director and planning committee representative Fran Grogan, "we believed the best way to show off the university was to put our students front and center. We were proven right, both

at the reception and at the visits to the offices of the various state officials."

Participating students represented the Agriculture Department, the Art and Music Department, the Government Department and the Student Government Association.

ASU's Meat and Food Science Program and its student organization, the Meat and Food Science Association, gave the reception its flavor by providing hors d'oeuvres from Angus beef, lamb and goat raised on ASU ranch lands. Conceived and prepared by the meat and food science students, the menu included smoked Texas rack of lamb with mango salsa, prime rib with garlic-roasted fingerling potatoes, and Texas barbecued goat with bourbon sauce in a puff pastry cup with Texas coleslaw.

Dr. Kirk W. Braden of the ASU animal science faculty said, "The Meat and Food Science Program at ASU continues to experience steady growth and activities such as the Austin alumni event allow us to showcase our exceptional students and programs, all while allowing our students to interact with individuals across a spectrum of state, public and university affiliations. Dr. Loree Branham and I are extremely proud of the poise and expertise our students continue to show."

The music students provided the excitement for the reception as seven members of the ASU Jazz Band played a selection of Texas favorites and other tunes that gave the event a festive air.

Faculty sponsor Dr. Timothy Bonenfant said, "These events benefit our students by giving them 'on-the-job' experience in doing the type of jobs they will likely be doing once they graduate. We also perform at events for charitable groups such as the Boys Ranch, Cancer Society, Meals for the Elderly, etc. It helps promote ASU by making the work we do visible in the community and not just on campus."

Though government students and student government officers attended the reception, their work came the next day as they accompanied the Texas Tech and ASU delegations around the Capitol, providing the student perspective on Angelo State as they visited with legislators and their staff members.

"I could not be more proud of our students than I was after our first Legislative Day as a member of the Texas Tech University System," said association president Kyle Box. "They proved to be fine representatives of the university and its accomplishments in affecting the lives of young people."

Overall, Box said this initial Legislative Day was a success in helping reaffirm to legislators the benefits of Angelo State's new affiliation with the Texas Tech University System and in demonstrating the increasing dividends that that affiliation is paying not only to ASU and TTUS but also to the people of Texas.

"By showing the success of our affiliation with Texas Tech," said Box, "we hoped to help further ASU's legislative agenda with elected



Food science students Kimberley Menchaca, left, and Jennie Canon



Adrian Alonzo and Rosendo Ramos of the ASU Jazz Band

Photos by Danny Meyer



# CLASSnotes

officials from across the state. That is an important message for us to deliver in economic times such as these and we in the ASU Alumni Association are proud to help the university get across such a positive message.”

The Taste of Texas reception was sponsored by the ASU Alumni Association as well as several individuals and businesses. Those sponsors were Winstead PC; AEP; Texas Bank; Dr. Joseph C. Rallo; Joaquin Guadarrama; Frank Sturzl; Eileen Felton; Wayne T. Franke; Arnold Garcia; Frances E. Grogan; Sande Harrison; Mickey and Renee Long; Mark McClung; Neil McClung; Jay Orr; Jim Ratcliff; and Mike Vallandingham.

The ASU Alumni Association’s Legislative Day Planning Committee was chaired by Janis Carter. Members were Cheryl deCordova, Marcie Cummings, Sande Harrison, Brian May and Grogan. ■

Each issue of the *Angelo State University Magazine* will highlight selected alumni and then invite readers to visit the Angelo State University Alumni Association Web site for the latest on their former classmates. To learn more about Angelo State alumni, visit [asuexes.com](http://asuexes.com). Better yet, see what your friends are up to and then update the site with news about you, your family and your accomplishments.

## 1987

**Darren Richardson**, who earned a bachelor’s degree in animal science and has since served as district conservationist with USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service in Seminole, has volunteered to serve a one-year assignment in Afghanistan to help rebuild that country’s agricultural sector.

Richardson will serve as a USDA Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) agricultural adviser. PRT advisers work on a variety of projects depending on the needs of the province. All projects are aimed at helping Afghanistan reconstruct the physical and institutional infrastructure of its agricultural sector.

In Afghanistan, PRTs are led by the U.S. Department of Defense and are typically composed of about 50-100 military personnel and several civilians. The PRT agricultural adviser is one of only a few civilians assigned to a PRT besides U.S. Department of State representatives and U.S. Agency for International Development field program officers.

## 2001

**William Davis Hale**, who received his bachelor of science with a major in kinesiology and a minor in English, completed his Ph.D. in health, leisure and human performance in December at Oklahoma State University. An assistant professor at Prairie View A&M University, he teaches graduate courses in exercise physiology and on current research in kinesiology. His undergraduate courses include measurement/evaluation in human performance and movement activities for elementary children.

Dr. Hale’s research projects include examining health risk behaviors within historically black college and university populations; body image concerns in various ethnic groups; psychometric evaluation of muscle dysmorphia instruments; and qualitative analysis of life satisfaction using Q-methodology. ■





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**Dr. Andy Wallace and Student Government Association**  
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## Dunnington

– continued from page 19

Webber Award from the Texas Medical Association medical students.

A native of Lake Charles, La., Dunnington lived the transient life of an Air Force brat until his father retired to San Angelo. The road to his career as a cancer doctor and tobacco control spokesperson began at Angelo State University, where he got his first small taste of being an activist.

“I had a double major in chemistry and biology,” Dunnington said. “I was the first double major ever awarded at ASU, but it wasn’t easy. It took me a year to talk them into letting me have it.”

During his time at ASU, Dunnington was a member of the Beta Beta Beta biology honor society, the Chemistry Honor Society and Alpha Chi. He was active in the American Chemical Society and the University Center Program Council, played intramural sports and spent four years in the student government. One of his fondest memories is being picked to drive “Star Trek” creator Gene Roddenberry to and from the airport when he visited campus. In between, he also managed to cram in some school work.

“I received a very good education,” Dunnington said. “I did a summer of biology research on lizards, which most undergraduates at big schools never get to do. I knew all of my professors and even went camping with some of them. Then there was Dr. (Alan) Bloebaum, who was great as a pre-med adviser.”

“Also, because I was in student government, I knew the president, Dr. Vincent, and most of the other deans,” he added. “Dean (Paul) Horne even participated in the egg toss with me at one of the social events, though he did not catch very well that day. Students from large colleges usually cannot say they knew the leaders of their school.”

After graduating cum laude from ASU in 1976, Dunnington headed to medical school at the University of

Texas-Houston Health Science Center. He followed that with his internship in general surgery at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and his radiology residency back at UT-Houston. It was during his internship when he made the choice to become a radiologist.

“At first, I wanted to be an orthopedic surgeon,” Dunnington said. “But, after four months of general surgery internship, I decided I did not want to do that. I had enjoyed working with the ER radiologist at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center (Houston). So I talked to him and applied for radiology residencies. I have enjoyed doing radiology ever since.”

In addition to his duties as a radiologist and radiology professor, Dunnington is also co-chair of the Health Affairs Committee for the UT System and has twice previously been the chair of the M.D. Anderson Faculty Senate. He has also served as chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee for the UT System and lists his appointment to that position as one of his career highlights. But, his first passion is still taking care of cancer patients.

“I enjoy radiology and I enjoy working at M.D. Anderson, which is one of the best hospitals in the world,” he said. “I enjoy diagnosing and helping cancer patients and it is very interesting working with the technology available in radiology.”

When he is not treating patients, teaching classes and working on tobacco control, Dunnington likes to spend time with his wife, Glenna, on their land near New Braunfels. They also like to travel now, since Dunnington has recently completed about 20 years of Boy Scout campouts with their kids.

Glenna is a nurse and the couple has three sons – Tim, John and David. Tim is a nurse at the University of Wisconsin. John is in medical school at UT-Houston while David is a student at UT-San Antonio. Tim and his wife, Lynn, are the proud parents of Dunnington’s granddaughter, Ginny. ■



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